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EU-China Relations: Identities, Interests and Interactions

By

Yiming Zhang

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and
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Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and International Studies. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

Abstract

This thesis explores EU-China relations from the perspective of identity. The research question is how, and to what extent, does identity influence the relationship? Dominant theoretical approaches in analysing this relations make mistakes by taking the actors' interests as given. In contrast, this thesis applies a constructivist approach and argues that interests are constructed by actors' identities. The hypothesis of this research is that it is **identity** which plays a decisive role in the EU-China relationship. The concept of identity mainly consists of two elements: *type* identity and *role* identity. Type identity explains the inner qualities of the actors, and contributes to understand the actors' characteristics, preferences, and the way they perceive others. Role identity outlines the dynamics between the actors, and illustrates their behavioural patterns in the relevant dynamics. Through these functions, identity defines the interests of the actors and thereby shapes their behaviour in these interactions.

In order to build a comprehensive understanding of the EU's and China's sophisticated mechanism in decision-making, the thesis begins by discussing the EU's and China's nature as international actors. In spite of the complexity of the their institutions and internal actors, the thesis argues that it is valid to study their relationship at the EU level.

By laying out the type identities of the EU and China from the four aspects of political regime, strategies, values and economies, the thesis establishes the inner qualities of the two actors, and shows what kind of powers they are in these realms. The findings are critical to understand the actors' preferences and cognitive model. Through a historical overview of the bilateral relationship from 1975 to 2012, the thesis explores the EU and China's role identities, and illustrates how the relationship has been changed as a result of variations of the role identities.

The case study focuses on the arms embargo negotiation that had taken place between 2003 and 2005. The case study demonstrates a clash among multiple identities, and shows how the identities determined the process and the results of the negotiation, which verifies the decisive influence of identity in the interaction among actors. This research contributes to providing a distinct perspective to studies of EU-China relations by applying identity in the analysis. It presents an alternative perspective from which to analyse EU-China relations by focusing on 'what the actors are' and 'what they are in each other's eyes'. Moreover, it makes a major contribution to studies of EU-China relations by consulting and explaining considerable Chinese language materials in a way that has not been done previously.

List of Abbreviations

ACP	Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific
ASL	Anti-Secession Law
CAAS	Chinese Academy of Social Science
CCP	Common Commercial Policy
CFAC	Central Foreign Affairs Commission
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIIS	China Institute of International Studies
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DG RELEX	Directorate-General for External Relations
DGs	Directorates-Generals
EC	European Communities
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EFSF	European Financial Stability Facility
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FALSG	Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group
FDI	Foreign direct investment

FPI	Foreign Policy Instruments
HR	High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International nongovernmental organizations
INTA	International Trade Committee
IOs	International organizations
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBC	People's Bank of China
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PSC	Political and Security Committee
PRC	People's Republic of China
QMV	Qualified majority vote
SAFE	State Administration of Foreign Exchange
SASAC	State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SOEs	State-owned enterprises
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEEC	Treaty establishing the European Community
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of European Union
TPC	Trade Policy Committee

UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Overview

This thesis explores the EU-China relationship from the perspective of identity, which is employed as a constructivist concept to analyse the nature of EU-China relations. In constructivism, identity is ‘a property of intentional actors that generates motivational and behavioural dispositions’,¹ which defines the actors’ interests and shapes their behaviour. Specifically, there are two kinds of identities that are applied within the thesis. One is *type identity*, which both demonstrates the inner characteristics of the actors; and also explains the actors’ preferences and the way they perceive others. The other is *role identity*, which constructs a pair of correlative relations within which there are relevant dynamics and certain behavioural patterns that will be followed by the actors. Examining identities contributes to the exploration of the actor’s genuine interests and helps us to understand the way in which actors behave in their interaction with others.

Since the EU features as a supranational entity, it is necessary to fully explore its mechanism of policy-making and to understand the relations among its institutions and member states. Hence, this thesis begins by discussing the EU’s nature as an international actor, and deems it necessary to examine diverse competences of actors within the EU. To match the discussion on the EU’s features, this thesis will also explore China’s nature as an international actor and interlocutor for the EU in particular. On this basis, this thesis explores different ‘type identities’ of the EU and China from the perspectives of political regime, strategy, value and economy. The findings demonstrate the instinctive qualities and the self-cognitions of these two actors, which are crucial in understanding the scope of their preferences and cognitive mode. *Role identity* is another major identity that is explored in this thesis. An examination will be made from the perspective of a historical overview between the years 1975 to 2012, focusing on the role identities of the EU and China in five phases. In each phase, the role identity is formed in different ways, and it also constructs different dynamics and establishes relevant behavioural patterns. As a result, the relationship changes along with the variations of the role identities. This historical analysis is not merely looking back in time, but can also be used as a long-term

¹ Alexander Wendt, *Social theory of international politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 224.

historically based case study that shows the influence of the role of identities on the development of bilateral relationships.

There is, of course, a need to examine a specific case study to show how the relationship is influenced by identities. On the basis of the exploration of both type identities and role identities, it is necessary to examine them together to see how they function to impact on the relationship. To accomplish this, this thesis deploys the arms embargo negotiations between the EU and China as a relevant case study to examine the influence of identities on the relationship. Between 2003 and 2005, China and the EU were engaged in negotiations for the possibility of the EU lifting the arms embargo on China. This case study is particularly relevant as the arms embargo negotiations enabled the identities of the EU and China to be closely examined, as well as their identities in a broader context involving the US. Through an examination of this case study, the resulting findings illustrate how identities (both type and role identities) can influence the actors' behaviour and their relationship.

The time period for this research begins in 1975, which was the year when the EC and China first established diplomatic relations. It ends in 2012, which means the issues that happened after this time will not be considered in this thesis. Therefore, events after 2012, such as UK voting to leave the EU in 2016, and the impact and consequences of this event on the economy and EU's values,² are not included in the analysis of this thesis. This also applies to events in China post 2012, such as China's second policy paper on the EU, which was issued in 2014 and aimed to deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership.³ This thesis does include China's policy paper on the EU, but focuses on the policy paper which was issued in 2003 not the latest version in 2014.

² See for example, Matthew J. Goodwin and Oliver Heath, "The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate - level Analysis of the Result", *The Political Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (2016): 323-332.

³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, *China's Policy Paper on the EU: Deepen the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit and Win-win Cooperation*, 2 April 2014, available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/wjzcs/t1143406.shtml, accessed 25 June 2017.

The Core Argument

The scope of this thesis is to explore the influence of identity on the EU-China relations. My interest in working on this project stems from the disappointing nature of the mutual communication between the EU and China, because these two actors dealt with each other without genuinely knowing each other. As a result, each actor put overwhelming expectations and criticisms on each other (this will be demonstrated in chapter 5, especially in section 5.3.3 and 5.3.4), which is not constructive in the development of a healthy relationship. Moreover, the ignorance of the actors' identity and its impact on the formation of interests exists in both empirical policy-making process and studies in academia. Some scholars assess EU-China relations without exploring the actors' genuine interests, and thus produce misleading conclusions/predictions on the development of the bilateral relationship. As will be shown through an analysis on Chinese language sources in chapter 6, a number of Chinese scholars overestimated the EU's willingness and capacity to promote the multipolarity in the international system and balance the US. However, without understanding the EU's various identities, their perceptions were proved somehow mistaken, as the EU was not as enthusiastic as China in building a multipolar world, and in the case of arms embargo, the EU did not lift the embargo as Chinese government and scholars expected.

It is this kind of misperception of the actors' properties that led me to study the identities of the EU and China. Given the complex qualities of the EU and China as actors, it is highly important to explore their identities in order to understand the development of their relationship. As will be demonstrated in chapter 1, the EU is a hybrid entity consisting of various institutions and member states. Therefore, it is important to examine the actors and their competences inside the EU so that we can fully understand the EU's capacity and motivation in making policies. With regard to China, it is not as unitary as some assumes in terms of foreign policy making, and it is difficult to understand its persistence on certain discourses (e.g. democracy and human rights with Chinese characteristics) without understanding how it perceives its own culture. Therefore, instead of looking from the perspective of the structure of the international system, this thesis applies a constructivist approach, which examines the individual actor's identities and perceptions. This thesis focuses on the actor's self-understanding of its inner characteristics (type identity) and the perception of others (role identity). To this extent, identity is a form of ideas, which as constructivism suggests, poses critical impacts on defining the actor's interest,

and thereby shaping its behaviour. This thesis examines the specific identities of the EU and China, and explores their impacts on their bilateral relationship.

Context of studies on EU-China relations

It has been more than four decades since the EU and China established their diplomatic relationship in 1975. This relationship across Eurasia has evolved to be one of the most significant relationships in the world. Both actors have significant influence in relative regional relations. Bilaterally, the EU is China's largest trade partner and China is the EU's second largest trade partner. Both actors have built considerable and effective institutions in trade, political dialogue and cultural communication, and also established a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2003.

The EU-China relations have drawn substantial academic attention. Scholars have applied diverse theories and approaches in analysing this relationship. As will be shown in chapter 3, the dominant approaches include realism, liberalism and the English School. Realists mainly analyse the relationship from the perspective of structural realism and relative gains. For instance, the approach of structural realism explains the reasons for the engagements between the EU and China that had taken place in the context of the transformation of the international system after the end of Cold War.⁴ The relative gains perspective is used to analyse the disputes between the EU and China in terms of trade and technological collaboration.⁵ Other approaches such as classical realism and neo-classical realism are also applied in studies of EU-China relations. Whilst realist approaches offer insights into understanding the relationship in the framework of the international structure, they neglect the function of the actor's ideas and their perceptions of the international system, which could have larger influence in the formation of the actor's interests.

⁴ See for examples, David Shambaugh, "China and Europe: the emerging axis", *Current History* 103, no. 674 (2004): 243.; Gustaaf Geeraerts, "China, the EU, and the New Multipolarity", *European Review* 19, no. 1 (2011): 57-67; Wu Baiyi, "后冷战国际体系变动与中欧关系 (The Post-Cold War System Change and the Sino-EU Relations)", *Chinese Journal of European Studies* 5, (2005):1-16;

⁵ See for examples, Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse, "Goeconomic Relations Between the EU and China: The Lessons From the EU Weapon Embargo and From Galileo", *Geopolitics* 19, no. 1 (2014): 40-65; Wang Gungwu, "The China effect in anxious Europe", *Asia Europe Journal* 10, no. 4 (2012): 335-340.

Liberal approaches have been mainly employed to explain the mechanisms of cooperation between the EU and China.⁶ It is believed that the absolute gains lie in the foundation of bilateral cooperation, and mutual benefits (particularly in economic cooperation) are the factor that drives the development of their relationship. Notwithstanding, it is argued in chapter 3 that what matters is what the actors believe. Progress in relations is made only if these two actors both believe in the principle of absolute gain, so that cooperation could be established, otherwise the asymmetry in ideas would be an obstacle for the collaboration. Moreover, neoliberal believes that international organisations can play an active role in spreading norms in their interactions with others.⁷ The EU had indeed implemented policies which attempted to change China's political norms gradually through economic interactions and norms diffusion,⁸ but the outcomes of such attempts were not as satisfactory as the EU expected.⁹ It is therefore argued in chapter 3 that it is misleading to talk about the effectiveness of socialisation without examining to what extent actors are willing to accept it.

The English School approach is perceived as a middle path in International Relations (IR) theory. As an approach that focuses on order, morality and values, it has been applied in analysing the issues concerning norms such as human rights, sovereignty, and climate change. By emphasising the function of ideas, the English School has provided a distinct perspective which stands in contrast to the other two dominant approaches. The constructivist approach is similar to the English School approach in terms of that they both emphasize on the function of ideas. Moreover, the constructivist approach applied in this thesis provides an additional value in the sense that it further examines the intersubjective perceptions between the EU and China, which reflect the changes in the nature of the bilateral relationship.

This thesis acknowledges that conventional theories do have value in addressing EU-China relations. As stated above, realism, liberalism and the English School have all provided

⁶ See for example, Carol M. Glen, and Richard C. Murgo, "EU-China relations: balancing political challenges with economic opportunities", *Asia Europe Journal* 5, no. 3 (2007): 331-344; Feng Zhongping, "中欧战略伙伴关系两支柱 (The two pillars of the Sino-EU Strategic partnership)", *World Affairs* 22, (2006): 66.

⁷ Martha Finnemore, and Kathryn Sikkink, "International norm dynamics and political change", *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 887-917.

⁸ European Commission, A long term policy for China-Europe relations. COM (1995) 279 final.

⁹ John Fox, and François Godement, *A power audit of EU-China relation* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2009), 19-31.

excellent insights in understanding cooperation and conflicts in EU-China relations. Nevertheless, as will be specifically discussed in chapter 3, they also have certain kind of imperfections in explaining the nature of the relationship. Whilst recognising the contribution of the conventional theories, this thesis will employ a constructivist approach, in which it will take an in-depth investigation of the EU and China's own inner characteristics and their perceptions of each other.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this thesis is that identity plays a decisive role in influencing the EU-China relations. As mentioned above and will be discussed in chapter 3, other approaches assume that the structure or the institutions of the international system determine the actors' behaviours. However, this thesis suggests that it is primarily identity which determines the actors' behaviours. The most significant difference between this constructivist approach and other approaches is that it assumes that interest should not be taken for granted, but is something that needs to be conceived and recognised by the actors. Therefore, in order to understand the nature of a relationship, it is needed to know what the actors' genuine interest is. The content of the actors' interests is shaped by their ideas and perceptions, which are ultimately determined by their identities.

Research Question

"How does identity influence EU-China relations?" This is the central research question around which this thesis revolves. Since this thesis assumes that identity plays a decisive role in the development of EU-China relations, then the central research question is to test this hypothesis by examining the ways in which identity influences EU-China relations. In order to address the central research question, this thesis needs to answer three sub-questions that are related to the central research question.

1. What is the EU? What is China?

In order to analyse identities of the EU and China, it is important to understand what the EU and China are, specifically, what features do they have to be international actors. To answer this question, the thesis first needs to explore the nature of the EU and China as international

actors. To avoid oversimplifying their qualities and considering them as unitary entities, this thesis explores their inner mechanisms in policy-making, and also the various preferences and interests within them.

‘What is the EU’ is not a simple question to answer as the EU is a hybrid that consists of diverse actors. The EU is not Europe, which is a geographic conception that consists of EU member states and other nation states. It can neither be purely represented by individual institutions (the Council, the Parliament, the Commission or DGs, etc.), nor its powerful member states such as Germany or France. When we analyse the EU, we need to understand who is speaking for it. The institutions and individual member states within the EU have their own initiatives and interests, which sometimes are not consistent. In order to understand the EU’s identity, it is necessary to draw a clear picture of its inside mechanisms. To answer the first sub-question, chapter 1 will explore the nature of the EU as an international actor, and discuss the EU’s competences in policy-making. On that basis, it will then establish that it is still valid to explore identities at the EU level.

To answer ‘what China is’, it might seem to make intuitive sense to consider China as a unitary actor on the international stage. However, China’s foreign policy-making is much more complicated. It is true that the country is ruled by a single party, but this does not mean that there is only one interest and objective that forms its foreign policy, and that all actors are aligned behind this goal. To answer this question, chapter 2 will demonstrate the plurality both in the decision-making processes and, in the way that various Chinese actors behave in the international arena.

2. What is identity in the constructivist context?

Identity is the core concept to be discussed in this thesis. Hence, it is extremely important to clarify what identity means in a constructivist context, and how will it be applied into the study of EU-China relations. Identity is a concept borrowed from sociology by constructivists. But, in contrast to the way it has been employed in sociology and the approach of Foreign Policy Analysis, it will be defined in a constructivist manner and in an (IR) context in chapter 3, which will also introduce the key elements of identity, namely type identity and role identity.

Furthermore, chapters 4 and 5 will respectively give explicit explanations to the nature of type identity and role identity, and show how it will be applied in the analysis of this thesis.

3. What are the functions of identities?

The functions of identities explain how identities influence the development of then EU-China relationship. The answer to this question follows an analytical logic that will be illustrated in Figure 9 in chapter 5. To briefly describe it, an actor's identity defines its interest, and thereby, shapes its behaviour mode. Following this logic, chapter 5 particularly explores how EU-China relationship changed as their identities altered. It also provides a link to the core argument that the actors' interests should not be taken for granted, but need to be recognised and conceived by actors. Furthermore, the function of type identity and role identity will be analysed together in a single case study of the arms embargo negotiations. Associated with an investigation of numerous Chinese language literatures, this thesis will give an answer to the research question and prove the hypothesis.

Methodology

The main methods employed by the thesis are documentary analysis and interviews.

1. Documentary Analysis

This major method constitutes a rigorous investigation and analysis on considerable Chinese language literatures on EU-China relations. In order to achieve an extensive understanding of the Chinese views on the EU, China and their relationship, this thesis has collected 176 Chinese language literatures from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), which is the largest database for Chinese academic resources. The author has mainly selected articles with title and key words of a) 'EU-China relations', b) 'EU-US relations', which also includes key words such as 'US', 'EU/European Union' and transatlantic relations, but articles refer to particular 'transatlantic relations' between the UK and US have been filtered out. and c) 'China-US relations', there is a much larger number (about 2775) of articles under this search, but many of them are not relevant to the EU. Only 13 articles have been selected as they also have 'EU' or 'European Union' in their key words. In the process of collecting, the author has

filtered out irrelevant articles which are non-academic materials (e.g., conference reviews, non-academic magazine articles, and media reports), and which discuss specific topics that are not this chapter's focus (e.g., details on trade negotiation and technological cooperation).

In order to develop a clear understanding of Chinese perceptions of the EU and the US, this thesis will take a qualitative analysis of the content of these Chinese literatures. It will highlight the identified key words (e.g., 'multipolarity', 'EU-US breach', 'US opposition' and so on) and calculate their percentages, which can show the extent to which China perceived the EU as a partner or something else. In a context that is dominated by English language research, consulting such a large number of literatures from another language has not been done before in studies of EU-China relations, hence it makes a unique contribution to the scholarship.

The official documents and speeches made by Chinese leaders and officials can be accessed from governmental websites (for instance, the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China) and official media such as People's Daily and Xinhua (along with the online versions). These documents provide the materials for understanding Chinese political discourse and the self-perception of the Chinese government.

Yet it would be biased to just focus on Chinese materials. The thesis is also based on substantial investigations of EU documents. In order to analyse the EU/EC's competences and mechanisms, the thesis has examined the treaties from the Treaty of Rome to the Treaty of Lisbon. In order to follow the EU's policies on China, this thesis has studied six versions of the EU's policy papers on China from 1995 to 2006. By interpreting the key words and tracking the adaptations of the documents, this thesis has demonstrated the EU's perception of itself and China, which lays the foundation for understanding the dynamics and developments of the EU's policies on China.

2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are applied as a complementary method to acquire information that cannot be accessed from documents or literature. I have conducted interviews in Beijing, Brussels and the UK. The interviewees in Beijing are Europeanists based in universities and research institutions, among whom there are some who have access to China's European policy circle. The key interviewee in Brussels was at the time an official in position in the European External Action Service. The key interviewee in the UK was also a high-ranked official of the EU who participated in the EU's foreign policy-making system. Due to the interviewees' request, their detailed information has been kept confidential. During the interview process, the participants were informed of my research content and were aware of the questions it sought to tackle. All the interviews were conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines that are required in academic research. The information obtained from the interviews supports and acts as evidence for the arguments I make in this thesis.

Scientific Contribution

On the basis of recognising the conventional theories' contribution in studies of EU-China relations, this thesis critiques the imperfections of dominant approaches employed in this realm and provides a constructivist approach. The constructivist approach is not merely a middle path between realism and liberalism, but also seeks to correct misperceptions and to reveal the genuine qualities and ideas of actors. From the investigation of the relevant literatures, especially those written in the Chinese language, it appears that the prevailing conclusions—which are mostly drawn from the perspective of the structure of the international system—have taken the actors' interests and motivations for granted, but the reality tells a different story in contrast to those conclusions. Therefore, by exploring the actors' identities, this thesis examines how the interests are conceived by actors, and then demonstrates what the actors really want from each other.

Furthermore, this thesis seeks to provide an alternative theoretical approach in terms of IR. It argues that the conclusions of scholars often reflect the authors' own discourses and expectations. For example, and as will be illustrated in chapter 6, when Chinese scholars talked about multilateralism, they tended to interpret it in having multipolar dimensions, and 'hoped' that the EU could be a potential pole to balance the US. They arrived at such conclusions by assuming what the EU should do, or talking about what they hope the EU might do, but they

failed to understand what the EU really *wanted* to do. Therefore, without genuinely understanding the actor's ideas and perceptions, studies might make mistaken conclusions on the actor's interests. In light of this, the intersubjectivity of the constructivist approach can provide researchers with an alternative perspective from which to analyse the actor's interest, and its relationship with others. In contrast with the large-scale of application of realist and liberal approaches in studies of EU-China relations, the presence of a constructivist approach in this area is not as prominent. By applying the identity element to the case of the arms embargo negotiation between the EU and China, this thesis demonstrates the validity of the constructivist approach in empirical research, and it expands the scope in which constructivism can be applied.¹⁰

Moreover, as mentioned in the methodology section, this thesis introduces and interprets a large corpus of Chinese language literature. In doing so, it provides access to substantial materials for understanding Chinese perceptions of the EU. This has not been done before in other researchers' work, and can be considered as a unique contribution of this thesis. The empirical contribution of this thesis is that it bridges the gaps between the two sides' perceptions of each other. As stated at the beginning, the trigger for this research was the realisation that the communication between the EU and China is asymmetric, as they are engaging without understanding the inner qualities of each other. By exploring the identities of these two actors, this thesis offers in-depth interpretations of their specific characteristics, and by comparing them in the same domain, it demonstrates the connections and differences between the two, which serves to close the gaps on perceptions.

Outline of the Chapters

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. The introductory chapter outlines the overall scope of this thesis and the context of the studies on EU-China relations. It identifies the gaps in current academic literatures and empirical realities, and establishes the core argument, the

¹⁰ Social Constructivism has already been applied in the studies of European politics, see for example, Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in international relations: the politics of reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Jeffrey T. Checkel and Andrew Moravcsik, "A constructivist research program in EU studies?", *European Union Politics* 2, no. 2 (2001): 219-249. What is said above means a further expansion of its current scope.

hypothesis and the research questions of the thesis. On this basis, it lays the signposts where the argument will be made and which questions will be answered.

Chapter 1 discusses the EU's nature as an actor. By illustrating the complexity of the EU in terms of institutions and internal actors, it indicates the need to analyse the EU's mechanism and competences. The discussions take place in foreign and security policies and international trade, which are the two major areas where the EU engages others on the international stage. In each area, the chapter explores the competences of the institutions and the initiatives of member states. At the end of chapter 1, it is established that despite the diverse actors and various competences, it is still valid to analyse the relationship at the EU level.

Chapter 2 aims to match the previous chapter on the nature of the EU as an international actor, and focuses on the nature of China as an international actor and, particularly, an interlocutor for the EU. In contrast to an intuitive perception of China as a unitary actor, this chapter argues that China's foreign policy-making is much more complicated. In doing so, it identifies various actors and their competences in China's foreign policy-making system. Moreover, this chapter explores the evolving features in China's nature as an international actor, and addresses the challenges posed in analytical terms by the evolution of its nature.

Chapter 3 establishes the theoretical basis for this thesis. This Chapter critiques the dominant approaches in existing studies of EU-China relations. Specifically, it reviews how realism, the English School and liberalism have been applied in studies of EU-China relations, and also identifies the shortcomings of these approaches in this area. On that basis, Chapter 2 explicitly demonstrates the essential elements of constructivism, and particularly explains the concept of identity. Furthermore, it lays out the salience of employing a constructivist approach in research on EU-China relations.

Chapter 4 explores the EU and China's type identity. It firstly establishes the definition of type identity which is used to analyse the actor's inner characteristics. Chapter 3 also explains how type identity is generated and the function of it. It indicates that type identity is a reflection of

self-understanding, it shows the actor's preferences and shapes the way it conceives the other actors. Subsequently, it examines their inner characteristics from four aspects of political regimes, strategies, values and economies. Respectively, in terms of political regimes, China conceives itself as a democracy with its own characteristics; the EU is a entity with multilevel democracy. In regards to strategies, China is a rising power that is pursuing the adaptation of norms; whilst the EU is a normative power with civilian means. In terms of values, China is an Eastern culture with Westphalian norms; on the other hand, the EU is a Western entity with post-modern characteristics. The characteristics of the two clash intensively in this aspect. Economically, China is a 'skinny giant' with the characteristics of a rapidly growing economy; the EU is a developed economy which is capable of wielding its economic clout to promote its normative programmes. The work within chapter 3 draws a comprehensive picture of what the EU and China are, and lays the foundation for the following analysis of their role identities.

Chapter 5 focuses on the EU and China's role identity. At the beginning, it introduces the notion of role identity, and explains the function of role identity in the relationship of identity-interest-behaviour. Within this framework, this chapter is mainly a historical review of the development of the bilateral relationship from 1975 to 2012. The review is composed of five phases, and the role identities vary from one phase to another, which will be specifically demonstrated in this chapter. The review of the EU-China relations proves the validity of the design on the relations between identity, interest and behaviour.

Chapter 6 explores the case study of the arms embargo negotiation. Building on the last two chapters, this chapter combines type identity and role identity together, and applies them in a single case study. The reason for choosing the arms embargo negotiations as the central case to study is that it demonstrates multiple identities of the EU and China. The negotiations took place between 2003 and 2005, which was the time when their role identities transformed from a friendly atmosphere to a critical one. It showed how those type identities—especially those in strategies, values and economies—influenced the actors' behaviours. Furthermore, it involved a third and important actor, namely the US. Accordingly, the role identities in the triangle relationship posed significant impacts on the defining of interests and forming of behaviours. The purpose of the case study is to test the hypothesis that identity plays the decisive role for each actor in the EU-China relationship.

Chapter 1. The Nature of the EU as an Actor

1.1 Introduction

In an attempt to study the EU-China relationship from the perspective of identities, it is self-evidently necessary to identify the relevant actors before commencing the associated systematic analysis. It is immediately apparent that a certain degree of asymmetry exists in terms of these two actors' identities: China, on the one hand, is a sovereign state with exclusive competences to perform on the international stage;¹¹ the EU, on the other, cannot be defined as a 'nation-state' due to its intergovernmental and supranational characteristics.¹² This therefore raises the following questions: 1) If the EU is not a 'nation-state', then what is its status or typology in its relations with China? 2) Why is it valid to explore the bilateral relationship at the EU level? Along with the development of the EU, scholars interpret it as either a regional power, promoting the progress of Europe and neighbouring areas,¹³ or an inter-regional power, bridging communications between different regions,¹⁴ or a global power, participating in world affairs.¹⁵ However, while each of these viewpoints is fully supported by abundant evidence, they do not answer Henry Kissinger's famous question about a 'European phone number'. Despite its supranational characteristics, observers have doubts over its ability to be considered

¹¹ The conception and properties of "sovereignty" have numerous definitions, here we use it to distinguish the quality of China as a state against that of EU as a supranational entity. The standards applied here quotes from the definitions of sovereignty in Stephen D. Krasner's book *"Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy"*, especially based on the definitions of international legal sovereignty and domestic sovereignty. See Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3-4.

¹² A *de facto* knowledge, explanations see Vivien A. Schmidt, "The European Union: Democratic Legitimacy in a Regional State?" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 5 (2004): 975-997; Tobias Lock, "Why the European Union is Not a State: Some Critical Remarks," *European Constitutional Law Review* 5, no. 3 (2009): 407-420.

¹³ Kristi Raik, "The EU as a Regional Power: Extended Governance and Historical Responsibility", in *A Responsible Europe? Ethical Foundations of EU External Affairs*, eds. Hartmut Mayer and Henri Vogt (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2006), 76-97.

¹⁴ Michael Smith, "Beyond the comfort zone: internal crisis and external challenge in the European Union's response to rising powers," *International Affairs* 89, no.3 (2013): 653-671; Federiga Bindi and Irina Angelescu, eds., *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe's Role in the World* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2012).

¹⁵ Natalia Chaban, Ole Elgström, Serena Kelly and Lai Suet Yi, "Images of the EU beyond its Borders: Issue-Specific and Regional Perceptions of European Union Power and Leadership," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no.3 (2013). 433-451; Frederik Söderbaum and Luk van Langenhove, eds., *The EU as a global player: the politics of interregionalism* (Abingdon; London: Routledge, 2006).

an independent actor,¹⁶ and if it is not, then ‘who speaks for Europe’¹⁷ becomes the primary question.

Firstly, it is necessary to be cautious when we raise the notion of ‘Europe’. Rather than the ‘EU’, Europe is a vague conception with larger geographical extent, including other countries that are not member states of the European Union itself. Since this study focuses on the relationship between China and the EU, then a clear line should be drawn to abstract the concept of the EU from the larger conception of Europe. Furthermore, a clear distinction should be made between the EU and a number of other organisations within the European region, for instance NATO, which is often highlighted in regional crisis management. Moreover, a number of statements or modes of behaviour that are conducted by the core member states (e.g., France, the UK and Germany) should not be confused with the ‘voice of the EU’. Additionally, and more importantly, the existence of these leading member states and numerous institutions within the EU enhances the associated complexity, which leaves observers to deal with a tricky task of distinguishing what actually constitutes the EU and what does not.

Taking into account these caveats, this chapter is designed to explore the nature of the EU as an actor. Within the ambit of this research, the ‘EU’ here refers to the ‘European Union’, which means that this relationship is analysed at the EU level. In order to establish a clear analytical framework for the EU-China relationship, a comprehensive and precise understanding of the EU is required from the outset. This chapter aims to explore the diverse actors within the EU and, in order to do so, it will give a detailed overview of the competences and coherences (which have or have not developed) in different realms of the EU. In doing so, this chapter aims to abstract the EU from the complex map of Europe, and establish the fact that in spite of the various actors within the EU itself, it is still valid to analyse it at the EU level.

¹⁶ Filippo Andreatta, “The European Union’s International Relations: A Theoretical View”, in *International Relations and the European Union*, eds. Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 38.

¹⁷ Sophie Meunier and Kalypso Nicolaidis, “Who Speaks for Europe? The Delegation of Trade Authority in the EU,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37, no.3 (1999): 477-501.

1.2 The EU as a Hybrid Entity

Although the EU has existed for more than six decades since the European Coal and Steel Community was established by six European countries in 1951, the rest of the world has remained somewhat confused when engaging with it. A series of treaties have been ratified and implemented to improve the performance of EU, but the enlargement and the reform of its institutions has led to an even greater conceptual gap between what the EU is and what it should be. Sometimes, third parties confuse the EU with its core member states or inner institutions; whatever the sub-EU actors do, the EU takes the associated credit or, indeed, blame. For instance, during the Libyan crisis, NATO's intervention, as led by France and the UK, went beyond the initial aim of civilian protection and promoted regime change within the country. Chinese observers focused their blame on the 'EU', and criticised its 'ideological/value-based hegemony'.¹⁸ However, on the EU side, it is also argued that the EU (not NATO) did not take responsibility for the intervention and, more importantly, the opportunity to develop its military power and apply it to an event which perfectly fits with an imagined 'scenario' in order to wield its military power (if such exists).¹⁹ This asymmetry of knowledge urges us to explore the true faces of the EU.

The EU has been conceptualised as a hybrid entity²⁰, which has many actors within it: member states, the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union (also known as the Council or the Council of Ministers), the European Commission and the Directorates-Generals (DGs). Faced with such a complicated entity, it is not at all hard to understand why third parties find difficult to gain a clear understanding of 'what is the EU?'

¹⁸ Tian Dewen, "西方意识形态霸权与利比亚战争 (Western Ideological Hegemony and The Libyan Crisis)," *Chinese Journal of European Studies* 3, (2011): 26-28; He Gang, "欧盟对外干预政策研究——以利比亚剧变为例 (On EU Foreign Intervention Policy——A Case Study of the Upheaval in Libya)," *Journal of International Relations* 6 (2013): 106-118.

¹⁹ EU affairs, "EU criticised over lack of action on Libya; urged to look at nuclear power", European Parliament News, 16 March 2011, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/content/20110316STO15690/html/EU-criticised-over-lack-of-action-on-Libya-urged-to-look-at-nuclear-power>, accessed 28 July 2013; Jolyon Howorth, "The Lisbon Treaty, CSDP and the EU as a security actor," in *The EU's Foreign Policy: What kind of power and diplomatic action?*, eds. Mario Telò and Frederik Ponjaert (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 72.

²⁰ Christopher Hill, *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996), 2.

‘What is the EU?’ should be the first question asked before analysing any other aspects of this entity.²¹ To answer it, some research has been undertaken at several levels, namely the regional, state and non-state.²² Similarly, a number of scholars have set two axes, namely the horizontal and the vertical dimensions, by which to analyse the EU’s foreign policy. The horizontal dimension focuses on the competences among the institutions of the EU, whilst the vertical dimension highlights the relations between the EU and its member states, who maintain their sovereignties to a certain extent.²³ There are also some analyses based on the actors within the ‘foreign policy-cycle’, exploring the subtle relations between these sub-actors and their influence on EU policies.²⁴ The actor-oriented perspective also includes the ‘principle-agent’ framework, as designed to analyse the relationship between the institutions in the policy-making procedure.²⁵ It is important to be aware of these perspectives, as this chapter will focus on the coherences and competitions among the institutions and member states.

The reason for focusing on the institutions and the member states is that the EU’s complexity is embodied in its relationship with member states and the relations amongst its institutions. Unlike nation states, the EU consists of 28 member states that are legislatively sovereign with their own national interests, which inevitably creates competition between them. Unlike a nation state, the EU does not have the legitimate power to compel its member states to follow a single agreement in every aspects of external policies. In light of this, it is necessary to clarify where the interest comes from (the EU itself or the member states) and where/whether the EU has the competence to perform its authority.

To look through the blurred lenses of the EU, it is necessary to examine its competences in different policy realms. In its specific relationship with China, the interaction is more prominent in the fields of foreign policy and commercial trade, so the following section will

²¹ Shaun Breslin, “The EU and Asia Within an Evolving Global Order: What is Europe? Where is Asia?”, *East Asia: An International Journal* 27, no.1 (2010): 1-13.

²² Ibid.

²³ Christian Lequesne, “The European External Action Service: Can a New Improve the Coherence of the EU Foreign Policy?” in *The EU’s Foreign Policy: What kind of power and diplomatic action?*, eds. Mario Telò and Frederik Ponjaert (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 81.

²⁴ Caterina Carta, “The EEAS and EU executive actors within the foreign policy-cycle”, in *The EU’s Foreign Policy: What kind of power and diplomatic action?*, eds. Mario Telò and Frederik Ponjaert (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 87-103.

²⁵ M. Shawn Reichert and Bernadette M. E. Jungblut, “European Union External Trade Policy: Multilevel Principal-Agent Relationships”, *Policy Studies Journal* 35, no.3 (2007): 395-418

explore the competence of the institutions and member states in these two areas, and then establish the validity to study EU-China relations at the EU level.

1.3 Competences in Foreign and Security Policies

The EU has been praised for its achievements in establishing such a giant regional entity, however, at the same time it is criticised for its lack of coherence and consistency. To some extent, its obvious shortcomings can be attributed to its massive achievements. Along with its enlargement, it has become an entity with 28 member states, and accordingly one could hardly expect it to construct a completely consistent policy, let alone do so amid the tangled institutions at the EU level.

1.3.1 Institutions

In terms of the institutions, even though the Lisbon Treaty applied a series of reforms and oversaw the adoption of new agencies, the EU nevertheless became even more complicated and ‘crowded’ from a bureaucratic perspective.²⁶ Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, two new positions have been created to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU’s foreign and security policy: the President of the European Council, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the HR). Strictly speaking, the HR position was expanded rather than innovated, as Javier Solana had been the predecessor to this position since the Treaty of Amsterdam came into force. With the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, the HR has been given additional resources with his or her position as a Vice-President of the European Commission and President of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

The appointment of the President of the European Council revealed the member states’ desire to maintain integration at an acceptable level, one which would not interfere with their own sovereignty and national interests to an too great extent.²⁷ Since his or her responsibility mainly

²⁶ Carta, “The EEAS and EU executive actors within the foreign policy-cycle”, 87; Mario Telò, “The EU: a civilian power’s diplomatic action after the Lisbon Treaty. Bridging internal complexity and international convergence”, in *The EU’s Foreign Policy: What kind of power and diplomatic action?* eds. Mario Telò and Frederik Ponjaert (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 34-38.

²⁷ Tony Barber, “The Appointments of Herman van Rompuy and Catherine Ashton”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48 (2010): 55-56.

rests with the general affairs of EU's development (as assisted by the General Affairs Council), their function in foreign affairs is to 'ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy'²⁸. In this regard, the President of the European Council faces a certain challenge: according to the Lisbon Treaty, the President seems to have an overlapping competence with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. As stated in the Treaty:

*The President of the European Council shall, at his level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, **without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy***²⁹. [emphasis added]

This statement left observers confused about 1) the criteria of the President's capacity, and 2) to what extent his behaviour should prejudice the power of the High Representative. These questions will be discussed later, together with the actual competence of the HR, in more detail.

The HR position is also associated with the position of Vice President of the Commission, and was therefore designed to be 'double-hatted'. Some scholars further argue that there is a third 'hat', namely that of the President of Foreign Affairs Council.³⁰ According to the duties of the various positions, the HR has at least three expected roles and functions: 1) an initiator and 'watchdog'³¹ of the EU's external policies; 2) an agent of the EU on the international stage; and 3) a bridge connecting the inner institutions, allocated in the area of foreign and security policy.

²⁸ Article 15 (6), Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 26 October 2012, C 326/13.

²⁹ Article 9B (6), The Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 17 December 2007, C 306.

³⁰ Wolfgang Wessels and Franziska Bopp, "The Institutional Architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty: Constitutional breakthrough or challenges ahead? CEPS Challenge Paper No. 10, 23 June 2008." (2008): 16.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

Regarding the first role, the HR is required to propose initiatives and ‘ensure implementation of the decisions adopted by the European Council and the Council’.³² Before proposing initiatives, the HR is required to consult the European Parliament and obtain the consent of the European Commission,³³ which means the HR does not have exclusive power in the realm of Common Foreign and Security Policy. Meanwhile, the HR is not alone in monitoring foreign policies, as the Political and Security Committee (PSC) has been designed to execute the same task, which is to ‘monitor the implementation of agreed policies’, where the Treaty on European Union (TEU) expressly emphasised that this be ‘without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative’.³⁴ How, then, to divide the competences? Does the PSC act on its own initiative, or is it an assistant of the HR?

Concerning the second role, we prefer to define the HR as *one* of the agents, rather than the only agent of the EU on the international stage. The TEU indicated the need for three actors to ensure the external representation of the Union. One is the Commission, whose competence is relatively clear as it represents the EU in all subjects, with the exception of the CFSP.³⁵ Within the CFSP, as mentioned above, the President of the European Council and the HR are both responsible for ensuring the EU’s external representation. These overlapping competences could be explored by comparing the corresponding hierarchy in interactions with third parties. For instance, before the meeting of the then President Herman van Rompuy and the then Chinese President Hu Jintao in May 2011, the then HR, Catherine Ashton, had met previously with Dai Bingguo, who then was a State Councillor and the director of the Office of Foreign Affairs of the Central Committee of Communist Party of China (CPC), to prepare for the presidential-level meeting. It is important to note that, as we shall see in chapter 2, Dai was not the foreign minister, but was in fact highly-ranked in the Chinese political hierarchy and, accordingly, had greater powers in foreign affairs. This cannot be exactly grafted into the relationship between the HR and the foreign ministers of the EU member states, but this example does help to explain the distinction in terms of external representation between the President and HR: the President is more of a symbol or figurehead, whilst the HR is a detailed executor.

³² Article 27, Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., Article 38.

³⁵ Ibid., Article 17 (1).

For the third role, with the his or her multiple positions in Commission and the Council, the HR can act as a bridge to pool resources together to ensure discipline in EU's foreign actions and increase the consistency and efficiency in the EU's foreign policy of them. However, more positions mean that the HR has to answer more institutions. In terms of the appointment and resignation of the HR, the European Council, the President of the Commission and the Parliament all have the power to choose a candidate for this position.³⁶ Therefore, the HR is responsible for nearly all the institutions involved in foreign affairs, and is also responsible for chairing the Foreign Affairs Council to promote the CFSP. As a Vice-President of the Commission, the provisions of the TEU also stipulate the HR's responsibilities coordinate the different external competences between the Commission and the CFSP. In this instance, the HR faces a particular problem: how much power should be delegated from the Commission? The fact of institutional transaction indicates a complicated picture: the European External Action Service (EEAS), which has been designed to assist the HR, consists of 'officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission'.³⁷ Under this provision, the former Directorate-General for External Relations (DG RELEX) was merged into the EEAS, leaving some mandates outside the CFSP to the Commission's new DG, the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), a department that allows the Commission to retain its capabilities in external affairs. This new service works alongside the EEAS and plays a key role in managing the operational expenditure of external actions. Here, we do not intend to analyse whether there would be competition or coherence within institutional co-operation, but this does nevertheless illustrate a sophisticated pattern of distribution of competences.

While the EU and its foreign policies have received considerable criticism about its general lack of coherence, some scholars have defended the EU on this issue. Lequesne argued that this kind of criticism is based on the hypothesis that the EU is, or should be, a centralised state-styled sovereignty, comparing the EU's multilateral institutions with the nation-state's governance, in the sense in which the EU would evidently be questioned as a defective polity lacking consistency, but with extensive competence. Furthermore, he added that even in the

³⁶ Ibid., Article 17(6), Article 17(8), Article 18 (1).

³⁷ Ibid., Article 27(3).

governance of a nation-state, competence is to some degree shared and bargaining exists between foreign ministers and other departments or subnational governments.³⁸ Therefore, the coherence and the consistency of the EU should not be over-expected or over-required. Since such incoherence and inconsistency is common in individual states, the EU does not deserve excessive criticism in terms of this particular shortcoming. Coherence is the ultimate goal, though at the same time this should not overwhelm the EU under its associated pressure.³⁹

1.3.2 Member States

The institutional reform brought about by the Treaty of Lisbon was intended to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the EU's foreign policy. Meanwhile, it was also intended to increase the coherence and consistency of the member states, which is another factor that is critical to the improvement of the EU's external capabilities. The Lisbon Treaty envisaged that there were two actors responsible for implementing the CFSP in practice: one is the HR, and the other is member states.⁴⁰ Problems arise in that while the HR is legally obligated to the EU, 1) to what extent are the member states duty-bound to fulfil their contribution to the CFSP? and 2) to what extent are they willing to do so?

To ensure that member states will comply with the EU's policies and support its actions, the EU has set a series of provisions in the TEU and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) to define the positions and obligations of its member states.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the treaties also state that member states retain those competences that have not been 'conferred upon the Union in the Treaties',⁴² which leaves member states a large political space within which to wield their autonomy. What then is the scope of the conferred competences? If we look into the provisions of the TFEU, in which are listed the EU's competences, we will find

³⁸ Christian Lequesne, "The European External Action Service: Can a New Improve the Coherence of the EU Foreign Policy?" 80.

³⁹ Hartmut Mayer, "The Challenge of Coherence and Consistency in EU foreign Policy", in *The EU's Foreign Policy: What kind of power and diplomatic action?*, eds. Mario Telò and Frederik Ponjaert (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 108.

⁴⁰ Article 24(1), 26(3), Treaty on European Union.

⁴¹ Article 4, 24(3), 42(3), Treaty on European Union; 'Part Six, Title iii', Enhanced Cooperation, Consolidated Version of the Treaty on Functioning European Union, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 26 October 2012, C 326/47.

⁴² Article 4(1), 5(2), Treaty on European Union.

that the treaty grants the EU the prerogative ‘to define and implement a common foreign and security policy, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy’.⁴³

However, according to Carta, competence can be categorised into four types: 1) exclusive competence, which is attributed to the EU only and where the member states do not have autonomy; 2) collective competence, where intergovernmental coordination is applied; 3) mixed (shared) competence, where EU and member states cooperate in a complementary way; and 4) competence of exclusive pertinence of the member states, which applies to member states only.⁴⁴ The TEU has assigned national security into the fourth competence, as the TEU leaves it ‘the sole responsibility of each Member State’.⁴⁵ Although defined as one of the EU’s competences, the CFSP is neither included in its exclusive competences nor shared competences.⁴⁶ Moreover, it is not a policy that merely performs at the intergovernmental level, but also concerns both the EU (along with its institutions) and member states. Thus, further exploration is needed to describe the specific decision-making process of the CFSP defined in the TEU.

The TEU states that decisions of the CFSP are taken unanimously by the European Council and the Council of the European Union,⁴⁷ by which member states can retain their autonomy and sovereignties in foreign affairs. Despite the fact that certain exceptions, where qualified majority voting will apply, have been listed,⁴⁸ member states still have option to avoid the enforcement of qualified majority voting by abstaining or declaring it is for vital and stated reasons.⁴⁹ Although Article 31 of TEU also empowers the HR and European Council to propose a qualified majority, the proposal made by the HR needs to be initiated by the European Council, and the way in which the European Council adopts a decision is still by unanimity,⁵⁰ thereby still allowing the preferences of individual member states to potentially override the

⁴³ Article 2 (4), Treaty on Functioning European Union.

⁴⁴ Caterina Carta, “The EEAS and EU executive actors within the foreign policy-cycle”, 89. The TFEU also defines EU’s exclusive and shared competences respectively. See Article 3, 4, Treaty on Functioning European Union.

⁴⁵ Article 4(2), Treaty on European Union.

⁴⁶ Article 3, 4, Treaty on Functioning European Union.

⁴⁷ Article 31, Treaty on European Union.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Article 31(1).

⁵⁰ Ibid., Article 31(1), (3).

EU's initiatives. Based on these provisions, some scholars have concluded that the decision-making process of CFSP remains unanimous.⁵¹

The TEU has defined the least requirement for member states, which is that 'they shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations'.⁵² But the definition of the EU's 'interests' should also be in accordance with that of member states, which is the 'common interests'. So that refraining from causing prejudice to the Union's interests means that complying with the EU's decisions would not prejudice the sovereign interests of member states.

Consequently, despite the responsibility and obligations to the EU, national interest remains one of the most important conditions that member states take into account when forming their foreign policies. National preferences can be compromised to some degree, but cannot be overdiminished, ignored or even excluded in the formulation of a collective policy. With the same significance, sovereign autonomy is another decisive factor, together with some related national traditions (e.g., the UK's transatlantic alliance), which stands prior to delegating foreign policy power to the EU.⁵³

The second question is, how willing member states are to fulfil their contribution to the progress of the CFSP. To some extent, member states seem to enjoy this currently fragmented framework of cooperation.⁵⁴ Outside this framework, they could establish bilateral relationships with third countries to pursue their national interests; within it, this framework can be used as a platform to facilitate their interests. Member states are quite shrewd at maintaining the delicate balance between delegating powers to the EU and absorbing interests from it. While participating in the cooperation of the Union, member states use the EU (or the

⁵¹ Wolfgang Wessels and Franziska Bopp, "The Institutional Architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty: Constitutional breakthrough or challenges ahead?" 23.

⁵² Article 24(3), Treaty on European Union.

⁵³ Christopher Hill, *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy*, 11.

⁵⁴ Mario Telò, "The EU: a civilian power's diplomatic action after the Lisbon Treaty. Bridging internal complexity and international convergence", 43.

CFSP specifically) as their 'agent' in order to provide collective protection, realise their respective interests, and increase their individual international influence.⁵⁵ However, it is difficult for the EU to satisfy the demands of all member states, thus it will face competitions associated with diverse national interests or preferences. Furthermore, the unanimous decision-making process of the CFSP is not sufficiently effective to allow the construction of a highly consistent foreign policy or action, whereby member states may choose to practice outside the framework of the CFSP, or else, pursue their preferences in other organisations. For example, in the Libyan Crisis, France, the UK and other states chose to operate under the framework of NATO.

The end of the Cold War and the turning of the US strategic priorities to Asia-Pacific and the Middle East are important, which has left the EU with the space to establish its own defence framework and wield its own military power. However, in such an 'archetypical scenario'⁵⁶ as the Libyan crisis, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) allowed few effective functions during the entire period. Although the intervention operation was led by France and the UK, along with a few other EU member states, but as mentioned above, this particular operation actually proceeded under the aegis of NATO.

The EU did claim that the CSDP – or to take an even further step, a common Union defence policy – should not prejudice member states' own policies regarding this subject, and should respect their obligations to NATO (specifically mentioned).⁵⁷ However, obligation is one thing but initiative is another. France and the UK did not choose to operate under the EU's framework, but rather NATO's. Furthermore, the presence of Norway (a nation that is not an EU member state) and the backup provided by the US amply demonstrated that NATO remains the dominant military institution in the European area and is also still seen as being effective and efficient, in contrast with the 'embryonic' CSDP.

⁵⁵ Christopher Hill, *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy*, 12; Wolfgang Wessels and Franziska Bopp, "The Institutional Architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty: Constitutional breakthrough or challenges ahead?" 4.

⁵⁶ Jolyon Howorth, "The Lisbon Treaty, CSDP and the EU as a security actor", 72.

⁵⁷ Article 42(2), Treaty on European Union.

As a consequence, it is reasonable to give the HR an excuse for inefficiency; in the area of security and defence issues, the EU's capability mainly rests on the support of its member states. The incoherence among member states not only affects the consistency of EU security and defence policies but also directly leads to an inefficient and incapable EU military power. A simple observation of the security orientation of member states illustrates the divisions within the EU in the sense of its foreign and security policy. France has been promoting its cooperation with the EU in a relatively consistent way. Following Gaullist principles, France has constructed its international role on the basis of maintaining its sovereignty and independence. However, with the ambition to be a global power, France cannot act alone without the support of an alliance or an organised group of other nations. Therefore, the EU offers an appropriate framework within which France might be able to implement its policies and extend its influence. While endeavouring to shape the EU's policy in a French way, Paris branded its European policy as being autonomous. On the international stage, France attempted to reduce US influence on the EU, and further prevented a diminution of its own sovereignty by pooling its power within the EU. Consequently, France may be considered as 'uploading' rather than 'downloading' policies in its participation with the EU, whereby the EU is treated purely as a tool through which to realise Paris's priorities.⁵⁸

However, some scholars argue that France's attitude could lead to a dilemma: while cherishing its sovereignty in cooperation with the EU, France is sticking to an intergovernmental pattern, but an effective and efficient EU can hardly be expected in an intergovernmental paradigm.⁵⁹ Although it is commonly believed that France has taken a more pragmatic and flexible approach in its EU policy, it has still not changed its intergovernmental characteristics. The normalisation of its relationship with NATO has also enabled Paris to achieve closer ties with those 'Atlanticist' states and has embedded multilateral cooperation in a more extended context. However, this adaptation does not make require any particular degree of genuine contribution to the EU. The roles of France and NATO were highly apparent during the Libyan Crisis, but the EU's voice was marginal. Nonetheless, re-entering NATO did help France to establish improved defence and security cooperation with the UK in 2010. However, whilst sharing a common sense of cooperation, Paris and London did not share the same agenda: the British

⁵⁸ Reuben Yik-Pern Wong and Christopher Hill, *National and European Foreign Politics: Towards Europeanization* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 19-34.

⁵⁹ Bastien Irondelle, "European Foreign Policy: the End of French Europe?" *Journal of European Integration* 30, no.1 (2008): 156.

government claimed that this cooperation was independent of the EU but the French government, by contrast, claimed that this bilateral cooperation would contribute to reinforcing the multilateral cooperation of the CSDP in the longer term. This meant France had not abandoned its aspiration to establish a strong EU, but was now moving towards a more pragmatic approach to achieving this. To sum up, France is willing to further integrate the EU, but in terms of the way it intends to achieving this, Paris is still pursuing an intergovernmental manner instead of setting a series of effective institutions to make a collective policy at the EU level.

The UK presents a relatively contradictory attitude towards the EU's foreign and security policy. While signing the declaration with France, in which the UK stressed its willingness to promote 'closer co-operation and complementarity between the EU and NATO',⁶⁰ London actually holds a relatively biased view of these two organisations. NATO is the pillar, and first choice, of the UK's defence and security policy, whilst the EU, specifically the CSDP, is a complementary actor which can only function where NATO cannot, or in the extreme, where NATO chooses not to intervene and leaves space for the EU.⁶¹

For decades, the UK has presented a rather two-faced approach to the process of implementing the CSDP; while it has actively proposed a number of initiatives for the EU's defence and security policy since St. Malo in 1998, it has also isolated itself from other member states by slowing progress towards deeper and further cooperation. For instance, an uncompromising attitude on the issue of setting the EU's operational headquarters left the UK opposing the member states who proposed it.⁶² Furthermore, while establishing bilateral co-operation in the defence and security realm, the UK does not share common purpose with France. The UK prefers to pool and share defence resources in a bilateral manner rather than a multilateral within the EU. In contrast, France's clear intention is to draw the UK into helping to facilitate such cooperation within the framework of the EU.⁶³

⁶⁰ Prime Minister's Office, "United Kingdom-France Summit 2010 Declaration on Defence and Security Co-operation", GOV.UK, 2 November 2010, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-france-summit-2010-declaration-on-defence-and-security-co-operation>, accessed 8 September 2013.

⁶¹ Sven Biscop, "The UK and European defence: leading or leaving?" *International Affairs* 88, no.6 (2012): 1297-1313.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

The contradictory approach by the UK has resulted in a paradox in the EU's defence and security policy. On the one hand, the UK is willing to strengthen the capability of the CDSP in order to relieve the burden on NATO, especially at a time when the US is turning its focus away from Europe and which draws away a part of NATO's strategic powers. On the other hand, it fears that the growth of the CDSP may undermine its national preferences and autonomy.⁶⁴ Therefore, a comfortable middle for the UK is to establish bilateral cooperation with a strong state outside the framework of the EU. With its shared interests in the realm of defence and a comparable military capability, France seemed to be the only option. Consequently, initiating such bilateral cooperation with its negative attitude towards Brussels, the UK presents the EU with a paradox: the UK is an obstacle to the CDSP but the CDSP cannot work without it.⁶⁵ David Cameron, the then Prime Minister of the UK, expressed the possibility of rethinking the UK's commitment to EU membership, which cast a shadow over the future of the UK-EU relationship, the consequences and influence of which are not yet clear but the impatience and frustration with the EU has been openly shown.⁶⁶

Germany, as a core economic actor in the EU, differs from France and the UK in terms of foreign and security policy. Germany did not participate (but was not entirely excluded) in the Franco-British defence co-operation and, according to observers, it also did not feel any pressure, or indeed the necessity, to involve itself in this regard.⁶⁷ Berlin has extensively criticised by its partners for its abstention from military action and its relatively low defence expenditure (€33.5 million in 2010, 1.34% of GDP, compared with the UK's €43.4 million, or 2.56% of GDP, and France's €39.2 million, or 2.01% of GDP).⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ronja Kempin and Jocelyn Mawdsley, "The UK, The EU and European Security: A German Perspective", *The RUSI journal*, 158, no.4 (2013): 34.

⁶⁵ Sven Biscop, "The UK and European defence: leading or leaving?", 1297.

⁶⁶ This was written in 2013, however the result was out in 2016—the UK voted to leave the EU. But the result has exceeded my research range, which is ended in 2012. So the consequences are not included in this thesis.

⁶⁷ European Union Committee, "The German Position", in "European Union Committee—Thirty-First Report European Defence Capabilities: lessons from the past, signposts for the future", UK Parliament, 24 April 2012, available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/lducom/292/29202.htm>, accessed 8 September 2013.

⁶⁸ Maria Leonor Pires, "Defence Data: EDA participating Member States in 2010", European Defence Agency, 7 March 2012, available at https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/documents/National_Defence_Data_2010_4.pdf, accessed 9 September 2013.

Germany is distinct from its partners in the sense of its unwillingness to use military force in the global arena, which was made entirely apparent during the Libyan crisis, in Afghanistan, and also in Iraq. Some scholars attribute this perspective to its strategic culture,⁶⁹ whilst others attribute this to its identity as a civilian power.⁷⁰ However, if we examine this situation from the EU's perspective, the criticism and blame about Germany's abstention lie outwith of the scope of the EU, lying rather within the purview of NATO or the UN. In the realm of the EU's foreign and security policy, Germany has been promoting the development of the CSDP since the enactment of the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties. Unlike its EU partners who are enthusiastic in implementing its actions, Germany has been seen as active in establishing an effective multilateral institution for defence cooperation.⁷¹ Therefore, Berlin would like to pool and share interests with Paris and London on the basis of institutional cooperation in Brussels, but does not want to be involved in military operations outside of Europe. In comparison with its low-profile in foreign and security policy, Germany is more enthusiastic in its role of a core economic state in the EU, thereby wielding its influence as a civilian power.

1.3.3 Summary

The EU has made considerable effort in terms of the development of its foreign and security policy. The improvement apparent in past treaties clearly demonstrates the EU's determination to establish an effective common foreign policy. The lack of consistency in implementing a collective foreign policy could undermine the EU's collective identity but, as observed above, despite the competition and complexity within the EU, it has had a degree of success in constructing the identity of an 'EU' on the international stage. The EU has been increasingly recognised as an independent actor rather than a simple collection, and coalition, of member states. The validity of the EU as an international actor will be discussed later in section 1.5. Here, however, this illustration of diverse actors' competences is not to point to the failure of the EU's efforts at building collective policy, but rather is intended to demonstrate the EU's complexity in making policies. For example, it needs to take into account diverse member states' interests when making a policy, and it requires complicated procedures to put policies

⁶⁹ Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the use of force* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 5-24.

⁷⁰ Mario Telò, "The EU: a civilian power's diplomatic action after the Lisbon Treaty. Bridging internal complexity and international convergence", 44-47.

⁷¹ Gunther Hellmann, ed. *Germany's EU Policy on Asylum and Defence: De-Europeanization by Default?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 135.

into effect. Such a sophisticated nature of the EU will be further discussed in the analysis of the arms embargo in chapter 6, as it will explain why the embargo was not lifted.

1.4 Competence in International Trade

The EU's external trade relations are undertaken within the framework of the Common Commercial Policy (CCP). In contrast with its policies in foreign and security areas, the EU has an integrated policy in the realm of trade, not only because it has a relatively long history of such since it was established in 1957, but also due to the evolution brought by the treaties. The EU's trade policy is at the core of the Union's function and gives the EU a 'single voice' with which to address the rest of the world. Regardless, this single voice needs to be constructed and the appropriate compromises adopted among the EU institutions and member states before it can be implemented.

Therefore, prior to the analysis of the EU's trade policy on the global stage, a study of the EU's inner procedures is required, along with the interests and preferences that influence EU policy. This section will first demonstrate the EU's competence in trade by reviewing the treaties, and will then explore the policy-making process in trade policy at the institutional level. Then it will analyse the economic interests shared by member states and the competition amongst them.

1.4.1 Institutions

As one of the most integrated policies of the EU, the CCP is often described as a typical 'principal-agent' model, which essentially consists of two levels: the first is the member states (principals)-EU (agent), and the second is the Council (principals)-the Commission (agent).⁷² The first level concerns the competences that have, or have not, been delegated to the EU, whilst the second refers to the relationship between the Council and the Commission (with the European Parliament also involved).

⁷² Sophie Meunier and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, "The European Union as a Trade Power", in *International relations and the European Union*, eds. Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 278. The principal-agent model in trade policy was specified into five levels, see M. Shawn Reichert and Bernadette M. E. Jungblut, "European Union External Trade Policy: Multilevel Principal-Agent Relationships". But in this chapter does not intend to analyse the specific levels but to just point out the main relationship between the EU and its institutions.

In terms of the member states-EU model, as mentioned in section 1.3.2 there are different types of competences that can be seen in the analysis of the relationship between the EU and its member states. The first level of principal-agent concerns the differences between the exclusive and mixed competences. The former implies that member states entirely delegate their power in commercial actions to the EU and act collectively at the EU level. The latter means that they maintain the ultimate right to ratify concluded negotiations within their national parliament. This diversity depends on the scope of trade, which has been expanded by various EU treaties from the Rome Treaty to the Lisbon Treaty.

When the CCP was first established by the Treaty of Rome (officially known as the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community) in Article 113, it granted the European Economic Community exclusive competences in the fields of tariffs, trade agreements and the uniform implementation of trade policy, in which decisions are made by a qualified majority voting in the Council.⁷³ The provisions related to the CCP had not been changed for some considerable time until the enactment of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997. During this period, the world and EU itself underwent dramatic changes: the Cold War ended, and the world entered an era of globalization. Moreover, the enlargement of the Community expanded the scope of trade as more member states joined, increasing the necessity to clarify the EU's competence in trade.

In this context, the EU reinforced its competence in international trade. The Amsterdam Treaty included a statement that the EU's exclusive competences could cover the area of trade in service and intellectual property on the basis of unanimity in the Council.⁷⁴ Even though the EU extended its competence, it was exercised in a unanimous way, which meant it still represented a compromise on the part of the EU and its member states. However, it was also provided a degree of preparation for its next stage of expansion.

⁷³ Article 113, Treaty established the European Economic Community, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 31 August 1992, C 224/6.

⁷⁴ Article 2 (20), Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 10 November 1997, C340/1.

In the Nice Treaty, a substantial number of trade competences were included in the provisions. ‘Trade in services and the commercial aspects of intellectual property’ was included into the EU’s exclusive competence (with exceptions that require unanimity in some conditions).⁷⁵ Moreover, this treaty also defined the scope of competences in specific fields, for instance the EU and member states share mixed competences in terms of ‘cultural and audio-visual services, educational services, social, and human health services’. Thus, member states were able to maintain the final decision to ratify the agreements related to their sensitive, individual concerns. In addition, the treaty also provides the space for the Council to extend exclusive competences into other aspects of intellectual property which are not otherwise mentioned in the former provision. The above shows that the EU’s competences in trade have expanded considerably.

The Lisbon Treaty summarised the previous provisions and added foreign direct investment to the EU’s exclusive competences⁷⁶, which further grew the EU’s competences. Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty increased the power of the European Parliament in the its policy-making procedure, which leads this discussion to the relationships among the EU institutions, as per below.

The second level of the ‘principal-agent’ model concerns the relationship among the EU institutions. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Parliament obtained increased power within the CCP. The provision clearly states that ‘The European Parliament and the Council’ shall implement the CCP through the ‘ordinary legislative procedure’ (formerly known as the ‘co-decision procedure’),⁷⁷ which gives the Parliament the same position as a co-legislator with the Council.⁷⁸ Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty granted the Parliament the right not only to be informed when concluding the agreements, but also to be ‘regularly informed’ about

⁷⁵ Article 11a (8), Treaty of Nice amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 10 March 2001, C80/1. The exceptions see paragraph 5 and 6.

⁷⁶ Article 188A (158), Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community.

⁷⁷ Article 207 (2), Treaty on Functioning European Union.

⁷⁸ Charlotte Burns, “The European Parliament”, in *European Union Politics*, eds. Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 163.

the negotiation procedures.⁷⁹ Formerly, the Parliament was passively informed by the end of the negotiation. In comparison, the Lisbon Treaty grants the Parliament increased powers to become involved in the process of trade and provides it with the information to monitor the Commission and negotiation proceedings.

Some scholars argue that the co-legislator position and receiving the same information do not necessarily mean that the Parliament has equal influence and power as the Commission and the Council does in the trade policy.⁸⁰ However, in comparison with the marginal role prior to the Lisbon Treaty, the Parliament has gained considerable power and authority to have an impact on the decision-making process. In addition, the change of wording also reflects the transformation of the Parliament's role. The word 'assent' in the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC) was replaced by 'consent' in the TFEU. Although the words are both used to describe the agreement from the Parliament that is required in trade policy, the former 'assent' is a passive power, which leaves the Parliament fewer options in making decisions. In contrast, the latter 'consent' is relatively active, providing the Parliament with increased initiative to participate in the procedure, and more space to choose when to agree.

Along with the larger role of the Parliament, the framework of the policy-making process has also been enlarged. In order to understand the institutional functions involved in this procedure, we will select the main institutions involved in policy-making and illustrate the interactions between them. The main three institutions in trade policy are the Council, the Parliament and the Commission. The former two act in the role of legislators, whilst the latter has the obligation of agenda planner and negotiator in the practical exercise of negotiating. There are specific departments or committees within these three institutions that engage in the process of trade policy-making.

⁷⁹ Article 207 (3), Treaty on Functioning European Union.

⁸⁰ See Stephen Woolcock, "EU trade and investment policymaking after the Lisbon treaty", *Intereconomics*, 45, no.1 (2010): 22-25; Rory Costello and Robert Thomson, "The distribution of power among EU institutions: who wins under codecision and why?", *Journal of European Public Policy* 20, no.7 (2013): 1025-1039.

In the Commission, the Directorate General for Trade (DG Trade) is responsible for setting the agenda of the negotiations and shaping the content of agreements. As regulated by the treaties, the Commission also needs to co-operate with a special committee in the Council,⁸¹ the Trade Policy Committee (TPC), which takes directives from the Council and monitors the process of negotiations. The Commission is also obligated to regularly report to the TPC and the Parliament. Within the Parliament, there is the International Trade Committee (INTA), which is the main actor in trade policy making and evaluating the agreements.

To open a negotiation, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Council to request ‘negotiating directives’. The Council will set out the ‘general objectives’ and authorise the Commission to open negotiations. The negotiating team is led by DG Trade, which will attempt to draft an agreement that meets the objectives set by the Council. DG Trade regularly reports to the Trade Policy Committee and the Parliament during this process, and will also consult the TPC and the Parliament to gain feedback that will be taken into account during the negotiations. When the ‘draft text’ of the agreement has been formed, it will be sent to the Council and the Parliament to conclude the agreement. In concluding negotiations, the Council has the authority to sign and conclude the agreement, but needs to consult the Parliament before so to gain their consent. When the agreement is sent to the Parliament, the agreement will first be discussed and evaluated by the INTA, and then the Parliament will make a final decision on the agreement in a plenary session.⁸² After obtaining the consent from the Parliament, the Council may officially conclude the agreement. Based on the understanding of the EU’s distribution of competences, the negotiation procedure as a whole can be illustrated as per the figure below.

During this procedure, the Council reaches its decision via a qualified majority vote (QMV), except where unanimity is required by the provisions. For instance, when the agreement relates to the ‘protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms’,⁸³ unanimity is required. Additionally, in the case of ‘mixed competences’, member states also retain the right to ratify

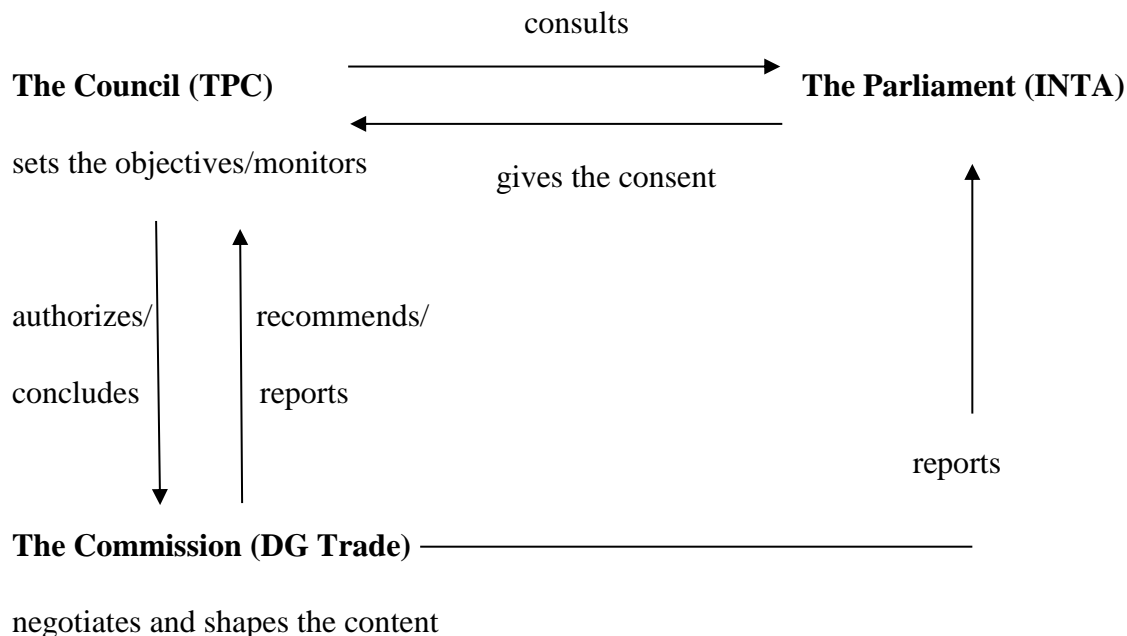
⁸¹ Article 207 (3), Treaty on Functioning European Union.

⁸² DG Trade, “Trade negotiations step by step”, European Commission, September 2013, available at http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2012/june/tradoc_149616.pdf, accessed 25 November 2013.

⁸³ Article 218 (8), Treaty on Functioning European Union.

appropriate agreements through their own constitutions so that they can protect their particular interests in specific fields.

Figure 1. The competences of the EU's institutions



During this procedure, the Council reaches its decision via a qualified majority vote (QMV), except where unanimity is required by the provisions. For instance, when the agreement relates to the ‘protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms’,⁸⁴ unanimity is required. Additionally, in the case of ‘mixed competences’, member states also retain the right to ratify appropriate agreements through their own constitutions so that they can protect their particular interests in specific fields.

The trade policy-making procedure is effectively a process of bargaining between institutions. The increased power of the Parliament makes trade policy more complicated not only at the procedure level but also relating to the content as well. The Parliament’s involvement leads to greater concerns over the issues of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and so on.⁸⁵ These

⁸⁴ Article 218 (8), Treaty on Functioning European Union.

⁸⁵ Sophie Meunier and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, “The European Union as a Trade Power”, in Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (eds.), *International relations and the European Union* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p.282.

concerns can place a certain pressure on the Commission, which has to take such issues into account when shaping the content of the agreement. Besides, as mentioned above, when the agreement relates to these normative issues, the Council should act unanimously, which means sensitive trading – for instance military arms trade – would be banned if the Commission were unable to obtain consent from those member states who were sensitive to trade in such areas. For instance, as will be discussed in chapter 6, the Nordic countries insisted that China's human rights record was not sufficiently good to justify resuming arms sales from the EU to China.

In terms of the actors who could participate in the trade policy-making procedure, the Parliament's new role, as granted by the Lisbon Treaty, gave NGOs or the lobbyists greater power to influence trade policy through the Parliament.⁸⁶ Furthermore, trade policy may be connected with the policies in the fields of agriculture, environment, development and other areas. Therefore, different DGs, Committees within the EU, certain NGOs outside the EU, may all participate in the trade negotiation process. The diverse identities of the participants bring various interests of their own. As a consequence, if we want to clearly understand the process of trade negotiations, it is necessary to distinguish where the interests come from and who the sources of such interests are.

1.4.2 Member States

While the EU has adopted a relatively integrated commercial policy, there are 28 member states in the EU who, given their individual conditions and different economic capacities, have different priorities in terms of international trade. Thus, inevitably, there can be a degree of competition among them in this regard, so it becomes necessary to review their various preferences in order to understand the inner momentum of EU trade policy.

The EU member states have diverse prior dimensions in international trade, and thus there are also various fields where they compete with each other. In general, Germany is the largest state in extra-EU trade, accounting for 23.4% of the total EU-27 trade in 2010; this was followed by the UK which accounted for 12.3%; then Italy (10.8%), the Netherlands (10.7%) and France (10.5%), each of whom had similar percentages. Whilst Germany accounted for more in

⁸⁶ Ibid.

general external trade than the UK and Italy combined, but in specific areas of trade other states might take a leading role. For instance, the Netherlands dominated the energy products market. There are also some situations in which certain states might compete over the same product, or one is the main exporter of some product of which another is the main importer, which might result in tension or even conflict between ‘producers’ and ‘retailers’.⁸⁷ The main states’ shares in extra-EU trade are listed in the tables below, which gives an indication of the dimensions of the interests among the member states and their competition within the EU.

Table 1. Exports share (%) in EU-27 (selected member states) in 2010

	BE	DE	ES	FR	IT	NL	UK
total	6.2	28.1	4.5	11.4	10.7	7.3	10.5
Food, drink and tobacco	4.7	13.2	6.7	19.5	9.5	13.7	8.4
Raw materials	6.1	14.6	7.1	6.5	7.0	13.6	12.0
Energy products	9.8	5.9	10.4	8.2	12.2	20.2	13.8
Chemicals	12.5	23.8	4.3	12.5	6.4	6.2	11.5
Machinery and transport equipment	2.7	37.4	3.1	11.5	9.8	6.1	10.0
Other manufactured goods	7.6	24.9	4.8	10.0	15.6	4.2	10.1

Source: *External and intra-EU trade: A statistical yearbook, Date 1958-2010*. (2011 edition), Eurostat, European Commission.

⁸⁷ Peter Nedergaard, “European Union Import Quotas on Chinese Textile and Clothing Exports in 2005: A Panic-Driven Commission or Rational Explanations?” *Journal of Industry, Competition and Trade* 9, no.1 (2009): 17–47.

Table 2. Imports share (%) in EU-27 (selected member states) in 2010

	BE	DE	ES	FR	IT	NL	UK
total	6.0	19.4	6.7	9.7	11.0	13.8	13.6
Food, drink and tobacco	6.7	15.3	9.5	9.2	8.8	16.4	14.6
Raw materials	6.7	17.3	9.9	6.8	12.1	17.6	9.7
Energy products	3.1	14.5	9.9	11.1	16.1	13.1	9.6
Chemicals	13.3	17.8	6.9	11.3	10.2	12.1	12.2
Machinery and transport equipment	4.2	24.0	3.9	8.8	6.6	16.2	15.1
Other manufactured goods	8.4	20.4	5.8	9.8	11.5	10.9	17.0

Source: *External and intra-EU trade: A statistical yearbook, Date 1958-2010*. (2011 edition), Eurostat, European Commission.

The products are categorised according to the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 4.⁸⁸ Tables 1 and 2 above reports data for the seven states which account for the majority of extra-EU trade, from which we will form a comparison from three perspectives.

First, we find that some states dominate the trade in particular areas. For instance, in exports, France had relatively larger amounts in terms of food, drink and tobacco; the Netherlands led

⁸⁸ United Nations Statistic Division, “Standard International Trade Classification, Rev.4”, United Nations, available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=28>, accessed 3 December 2013.

in the realm of energy products by 20.2%; Germany dominated the chemicals, machinery and transport equipment markets, and indeed other manufactured goods, with relatively obvious advantages. Germany also accounted for the majority of export in raw materials, but the gap between Germany and its followers in this regard was not as large as those for the former three product areas.

Second, as can be seen in the area of raw materials in Table 1, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK had similar percentages in terms of exports, which suggests that these member states might compete in this realm. It can also be noticed that Germany and the Netherlands had a close percentage in trade in food, drink and tobacco. Belgium and France had the same proportion of chemicals exports. The competition between France, Italy and the UK in terms of exports in machinery and transport equipment is also demonstrated by the figures in Table 1.

Third, through a comparison of the two tables in terms of exports and imports, we find that certain particular products, namely those which are the main export commodities of certain states, happen to be the main import commodities of other states. For instance, in energy products exports, the Netherlands accounted for 20.3%, whilst Germany only accounted for 5.9%. In terms of imports, Germany had the second-largest proportion in trade at 14.5%. A similar example can be found in the trade of machinery and transport equipment, in which the positions of Germany and Netherlands are reversed. This could cause a certain tension between the so-called ‘producers’ and ‘retailers’ as a given product that a state relies on for its exports might well be the exact one that another state wants to import. Thus, restrictions on the import of this kind of product might benefit the producer but harm the retailer.

We cannot judge this relationship solely from the shared percentage at the EU level, but also need to explore the proportion such products in the nation state’s external trade. If the product only accounts for a small amount of the state’s extra trade, then its restriction will not significantly affect the basis of the entire trade amount. For instance, the UK accounted for 14.6% of the import of food, drink and tobacco, which is a relatively large amount in contrast to other member states at the EU level. In 2010, the UK’s imports in this area amounted to

€39,115 million, but the total import amount was €445,874 million, which means the UK's imports only accounted for 8.8% of the entire trade in these products.⁸⁹ This is not to suggest that 8.8% is a small amount or that the trade in this area is not important, but through the table below, we can infer that it will affect the UK more in the area of machinery and transport equipment than in that of food, drink and tobacco. Similarly, restrictions on machinery and transport equipment might cause more damage to Germany than to Belgium since the former accounted for 36.1% and the latter accounted for only 12.7%.

Table 3. Trade share (%) of products by nation-state in 2010

	BE	DE	ES	FR	IT	NL	UK
Food, drink and tobacco	7.4	7.0	9.4	8.0	8.3	8.7	8.8
Raw materials	4.6	4.5	5.0	2.8	5.0	5.3	2.8
Energy products	13.8	11.8	17.9	13.6	18.5	18.8	10.7
Chemicals	18.8	13.4	14.5	14.0	13.7	11.3	12.0
Machinery and transport equipment	23.4	36.1	29.1	34.1	27.8	31.7	34.2
Other manufactured goods	24.2	25.3	23.6	27.0	25.5	21.2	25.5

Source: EU trade by Member State, partner and product group (ext_go_lti_ext), Eurostat, accessed 4 December 2013.

To illustrate this conflict of interests among member states, and to further connect this section to our main topic - EU-China relations - we will use the case of the photovoltaic dispute

⁸⁹ EU trade by Member State, partner and product group (ext_go_lti_ext), Eurostat, accessed 4 December 2013.

between the EU and China to explore the various dimensions of interest amongst member states in terms of international trade.

This trade dispute concerned crystalline silicon photovoltaic modules and their key components. On 25 July 2012, on behalf of some other producers, a company called EU ProSun lodged a complaint to the European Commission, stating that the products imported from China had been ‘dumped’ and caused ‘material injury to the Union’s industry’.⁹⁰ The price of these Chinese products was 88% lower than the ‘fair value’ in the EU market, which had a ‘significant negative effect’ on the European producers.⁹¹ An investigation was launched two months later after the complaint was lodged. During this two-month period, China invested a lot of effort in preventing this investigation, including accepting the complaint against its solar products and announcing a bilateral agreement with Germany about resolving the dispute by negotiation rather than imposing provisional duties.

After the launch of the investigation, China sent a delegation to Berlin, Paris and Brussels to negotiate the dispute. Meanwhile, the European Commission evaluated the interests of all parties, including ‘exporting producers, Union producers, importers and suppliers of components such as silicon, installers’. There was a certain division among these parties in terms of their attitudes towards Chinese solar products. On the one hand, retailers who sold Chinese photovoltaic products and the companies who installed solar panel were naturally resistant to the provisional duties, as this would lead to massive job losses in their sectors. Additionally, the provisional duties could also harm the companies selling raw materials and production facilities to China. Therefore, the Commission’s decision could affect not only the photovoltaic industry, but also the upstream and downstream branches. On the other hand, the photovoltaic producers – again quite naturally – insisted on the provisional duties being imposed, as this would secure 25,000 jobs in solar production. Furthermore, it would protect

⁹⁰ European Commission, “Notice of initiation of an anti-dumping proceeding concerning imports of crystalline silicon photovoltaic modules and key components (i.e. cells and wafers) originating in the People's Republic of China ((2012/C 269/04)”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 6 September 2012, C269/5.

⁹¹ Delegation of the European Union to China, “EU imposes provisional anti-dumping tariffs on Chinese solar panels”, European Commission, 4 June 2013, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/press_corner/all_news/news/2013/20130605_en.htm, accessed 5 December 2013.

the EU's photovoltaic industry and ensure a fair market. Resisting this dissenting voice, the Commission itself believed that job losses would be much less than the estimated 25,000, and could further be recreated, along with alternative imports from other countries.⁹²

Considering the prospect that the provisional duties might lead to a trade war between the EU and China, thereby having negative impacts on both sides, a number of voices advocated negotiation rather than implementing anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures. In terms of member states, Germany was the first to oppose the Commission. According to China's official media, Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and Economy Minister, Philipp Rösler, both stated their concerns about a trade war and their standpoint on the negotiations.⁹³ However, photovoltaic products are included in the trade of goods, which is categorised as being part of the EU's exclusive competence, and therefore one individual member state's interests were not sufficient to affect the EU's final decision in this regard as it was made by a qualified majority vote in the Council.

The definitive measures set the duty at 11.8% from 6 June until 6 August 2013, followed by a duty at 47.6% in the next stage.⁹⁴ From China's perspective, the measures might cause huge damage to China's own photovoltaic industry and would inevitably lead to a trade war with the EU. However, both sides kept open to the possibility of a further round of negotiations, and after weeks of bargaining, a price undertaking replaced the anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties. Both China and the EU compromised at an acceptable level in an amicable manner. This case reflects the fact that there were various interest groups within the EU.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Xinhua, "德国批评欧盟对中国太阳能电池板征收反倾销税 (Germany criticized EU's anti-dumping duties on China's solar panel)", GOV.CN, available at http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2013-06/05/content_2419430.htm, accessed 8 December 2013.

⁹⁴ Delegation of the European Union to China, "Commissioner De Gucht: "We found an amicable solution in the EU-China solar panels case that will lead to a new market equilibrium at sustainable prices"", European Commission, 27 July 2013, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/press_corner/all_news/news/2013/20130729_en.htm, accessed 8 December 2013.

1.4.3 Summary

The EU, as an entity, is becoming increasingly complicated as it evolves; the increased power of the Parliament has not only added a co-legislator, but also more actors who can influence the policy-making process. The enlargement of the EU increased the member states' interest dimension. Although the EU's trade policy remains relatively integrated, the complexity of the bargaining between institutions and member states cannot be neglected. In terms of the institutions, the three main actors – the Council, the Commission and the Parliament – are, respectively, independent institutions, where each have their own preferences in the policy-making process. In order to get a clear view of understanding the trade policy at the EU level, it is needed to consider all these three institutions' interests.

The situation amongst member states is even more complicated than that of the institutions because, as sovereign states, they retain powers over national trade. Despite the fact that the EU has extended the content of exclusive competence in trade, member states can still establish bilateral trade relationships with third countries. In light of this, we should note the fact that a bilateral commercial relationship cannot be mistaken as a barometer of the relationship with the EU, especially when the bilateral trade relationships with individual nation-states can be affected by political disputes. We should therefore focus on the macroscopic view at the EU level.

1.5 Validity at the EU Level

The above sections have explored the complicated relations among the institutions and member states, and also demonstrated the EU's competences in principal areas. This section will establish why it is still valid to study the EU's external relations, particularly, EU-China relations, at the EU level. Since there are various actors within the EU who are entitled to wield power to address their own preferences, one might ask why the EU, as a supranational entity consisting of these actors, can be identified as a valid international actor that can both impose constraints on its internal actors and also have the right to engage with external actors. Or, in other words, why should it be reasonable to identify the EU as a legal international actor and a valid counterpart in the relationship with China? Why should we look at the EU level?

The above can be explained from two perspectives: first, the EU itself has a legal personality, which means it could be considered a valid actor in bilateral relationships; second, the EU is a different and distinct power to its member states, therefore it is meaningful to explore the bilateral relationship at the EU level.

The issue of legal personality is an extensive subject concerning international law, and there are also various arguments regarding the EU's legal personality.⁹⁵ This thesis does not intend to explore this issue too deeply, and will do so only the extent required to explain the validity of taking the EU as an international actor. To have an international legal personality, an organisation must meet certain conditions, both internally and externally. Scholars have explained these conditions in several similar ways. Some indicate that legal personality can be obtained if the organisation is capable of acting both 'vis-à-vis to its own member states and vis-à-vis other international legal persons';⁹⁶ the former indicates that the organisation can perform independently 'under international law and as such accepted by all members',⁹⁷ whilst the latter means the organisation 'is acknowledged by other participants in the international system'.⁹⁸ Some also set three criteria to have international legal personality:

'A permanent association of States equipped with organs;

A distinction in terms of legal powers and purposes between the organization and its member states; and

The existence of legal powers exercisable on the international plane'.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ See for example, R. Leal-Arcas "EU legal personality in foreign policy", *Boston University International Law Journal* 24, (2006): 24-165; Philippe De Schoutheete and Sami Andoura. "The legal personality of the European Union", *Studia Diplomatica* 60, no.1 (2007): 233; Koehler, Kateryna. "European foreign policy after Lisbon: strengthening the EU as an international actor", *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4, no.1 (2010): 57.

⁹⁶ Ramses A. Wessel, "Revisiting the International Legal Status of the EU", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 5 (2000): 509-510.

⁹⁷ Julija Brsakoska Bazerkoska, "The Legal Personality of the EU", *Iustinianus Primus Law Review* 2, no.1 (2011): 4.

⁹⁸ Christopher Lord, "Legitimate and Democratic? The EU's international role", in *International relations and the European Union*, eds. Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 129.

⁹⁹ Ian Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 649.

If we examine the EU according to these criteria, the first has obviously been met; the second criterion will be explored later in the second perspective of the EU as a different power from its member states; and the third relates to the EU's external operational capability. Although the criteria do not mention internal support from member states, we can surmise that legal personality can be obtained at two levels: the internal (domestic) level and the external (international) level, which we will discuss below.

At the internal level, the easiest and most straightforward way to obtain legal personality is to stipulate it in a treaty. After a long period of evolution, the Lisbon Treaty finally stated that 'the Union shall have legal personality',¹⁰⁰ which put an end to the various debates or doubts as to whether the EU had an implicit legal personality. The Treaty clearly granted the EU legal personality, and further put certain limitations on it via Declaration 24 in stating that the EU could not act 'beyond the competences conferred on it by the member states'.¹⁰¹ This provision implies that although the EU's legal personality is limited in some regards, member states do entrust the EU with rights to conduct affairs in many aspects, in which a qualified majority vote applies.

To have a legal personality, an organisation needs to be capable of imposing constraints on its member states. The qualified majority vote in the Council represents further proof that the EU has the power to constrain member states in its policy-making. Member states are bound to comply with the EU's decision if the qualified majority vote is valid. Moreover, the Council itself is a legal institute of the EU, so voting by member states in the Council implies that they are willing to delegate their sovereignties to the EU.

If we explore a little further, as a supranational polity, the EU needs to gain its legal personality from another level - its citizens. The Parliament is now the main institution that directly connects the EU and its citizens, though it was previously only a marginal actor. After the Lisbon Treaty, the Parliament gained considerable power, and thus became the co-legislator in

¹⁰⁰ Article 46 A, The Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community.

¹⁰¹ "24. Declaration concerning the legal personality of the European Union", Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 17 December 2007, C306/2.

the ordinary legislative procedure. This means the public are represented at the EU level and can actually influence the process of policy-making. This grants the EU legal personality from another perspective.

At the external level, the basic criterion by which an organisation obtains its legal personality is that of being recognised by other legal international actors. The EU has been widely recognised in international society, and indeed has 139 delegations worldwide. In addition, the EU has been recognised by other international organisations as well. For instance, it has been an official member of the WTO since 1995; and the EU is also a UN observer even though it does not have the right to vote, but as the only non-state participant, it has been involved in a large number of UN-related issues.

In terms of communicating and forming contracts with third parties, the Commission and the Council are the two main institutions in the negotiation and conclusion of agreements with other international actors. Since it was established, the EC/EU has not stopped wielding its power in the attempt to influence other actors across the world. The measures include trade agreements, financial aid, economic sanctions, leadership communication and so on. The EU has demonstrated that, beyond being recognised by international actors, it can also in turn influence the world itself. Such examples of the EU's influence have demonstrated that it has a legal personality, and therefore we can take it as a legal international actor.

If we take a further look at the EU's type identity – a concept which will be explored in detail in chapter 4—that is what kind of power is the EU? We find that it is a different kind of power to its member states. On the one hand, large states, such as France, the UK and Germany, and to some extent Italy and Spain, have extensive military power, which implies they can implement 'hard' policies in certain situations. On the other hand, small states are not capable of imposing effective influence on great powers. In contrast to these member states, the EU is not equipped with military means, but is capable of influencing other powers with its resources. Furthermore, as an unprecedented highly-organised polity itself, the EU has a certain degree of soft power that other global powers do not have.

Then what kind of power is the EU? It has been argued that the EU can be described by two ‘oversimplified’ arguments.¹⁰² Realists argue that the EU is unqualified to be an actor due to its inconsistent structure and the fact that it is incapable of implementing physical power. Some scholars describe the EU as a cosmopolitan with normative power.¹⁰³ However, the capability to implement these principles should be questioned.¹⁰⁴ Telò claimed that the EU is an incipient civilian power, which could use its material resources to influence others.¹⁰⁵ This form of definition also conforms to Manners’ classification of military/civilian/normative power,¹⁰⁶ with Tocci illustrating that the EU is not always a genuine, normative power in light of its behaviour in specific affairs.¹⁰⁷ To sum up, the EU could be conceptualised as a normative power with civilian means: it intends to disseminate its norms to other international actors, but in a civilian manner. The analysis of the EU’s type identity as a normative power will be fully discussed in chapter 3. The argument here are only intended to indicate that the EU is different to its member states.

The EU is indeed a distinct power in contrast with its member states; therefore, from the perspective of identity, we cannot identify the EU as a simple combination of its member states, because their preferences will be conducted in a different way at the EU level. This is why it is necessary to emphasise the importance of analysis at the EU level – China’s relationship with the EU is different to its bilateral relationships with individual EU member states. In order to understand the EU-China relationship, it is necessary to study the characteristics of the EU itself at the supranational level.

¹⁰² Mario Telò, “The EU: a civilian power’s diplomatic action after the Lisbon Treaty. Bridging internal complexity and international convergence”, 39.

¹⁰³ Erik O. Eriksen, “The EU-A Cosmopolitan Polity?” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no.2 (2006): 252-69; Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no.2 (2002): 252

¹⁰⁴ Christopher Hill, “The capability-expectations gap, or conceptualizing Europe’s international role,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31, no.3 (1993): 305-28.

¹⁰⁵ Mario Telò, “The EU: a civilian power’s diplomatic action after the Lisbon Treaty. Bridging internal complexity and international convergence”, 39.

¹⁰⁶ Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?”, 240.

¹⁰⁷ Nathalie Tocci, “The EU as a Normative Foreign Policy Actor”, in *Who is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor? The European Union and its Global Partners*, eds. Nathalie Tocci, (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008), 24-25.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the nature of the EU as an actor. The EU is a hybrid entity comprising multiple actors, various of whom have different competences and interests. Without clarifying what these actually are, research into the EU would be misdirected by its complicated procedures and diverse interests. Therefore, before analysing the relationship between the EU and China, it was vital to conduct a thorough, prior exploration of the EU. In doing so, this chapter has attempted to clarify the EU's relationship with its member states, illustrate the institutions' competences, and show the convergence and divergence among member states. The work will contribute to our subsequent understanding of the EU's mechanisms and build a solid basis for the analysis of the EU-China relations in the following chapters.

To achieve this purpose, this chapter has demonstrated the competences of the EU (and its institutions) and revealed the preferences of the member states in their participation with the EU. The focus of the work was based on the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Commercial Policy. The former is the area where the EU strives to build a coherent policy, and the latter is where the EU has a relatively integrated policy. Furthermore, both areas are the main spheres in which the EU engages with China.

In the section describing foreign and security policies, this chapter focused on the powers and responsibilities of the High Representative and the President of the European Council. Through examining these two positions, the analysis was further expanded to other institutions such as the PSC, the EEAS and FPI. The result of the examination gave a complex picture of the CFSP in which there are overlapping responsibilities and competitive powers among these institutions. This section also examined the EU's competence and the autonomy of its member states to make foreign policy, showing that in terms of foreign and security policies, the EU's competence is still limited, as its member states currently prefer to retain their sovereign positions in sensitive areas.

In the section on international trade, in which the EU has a relatively consistent policy, this chapter reviewed the evolution of the treaties that granted the EU increasingly exclusive competence in this regard. Furthermore, this section illustrated the procedural relations among

the institutions of the Council, the Commission and the Parliament (and also the relations among the Committees under the structure of the main institutions). By analysing the data on trade conducted by EU member states, the competing interests of member states was highlighted. Moreover, the case study into the disputes on the photovoltaic trade demonstrated the diverse preferences of individual member states. This section indicated that even in the areas of trade which have the most consistent policies, there is still a certain divergence between the various actors within the EU.

After illustrating the multiple actors in the EU and the divergence between them, the following section confirmed the validity of considering the EU as an international actor. The analysis of the validity was conducted from two perspectives: the internal dimension explored the EU's legal personality and its legitimacy to be considered a supranational polity, whilst the external dimension reviewed the EU's role in international society. From each of these dimensions, one can conclude that the EU should be, and indeed has been, recognised as a valid international actor. By further exploring the EU's type identity as a normative power, this chapter argued that the EU is a distinct international actor in relation to its member states, and that this relationship has different qualities at the EU level. Therefore, it is indeed meaningful to study EU-China relations at the EU level.

Before analysing the identities of the EU and China, confirmation was required that the EU is a valid actor which is eligible to have an identity. By examining the institutions and member states within the EU, this chapter confirmed the pertinence of the EU's legal personality, and established the basis for studying EU's identities in further research. From a different perspective, despite recognising the validity of considering the EU as an international actor, we cannot ignore the various actors within the EU and the diverse interests that are attached to them, and it is extremely important to clarify who is acting, and in whose interests they are doing so.

Chapter 2 China's Nature as an International Actor

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the complex mechanisms of EU institutions, and demonstrated the various initiatives of the EU and its member states. On this basis, it argued that it is valid to consider the EU as an international actor. Given the fact that this thesis focuses on the relationship between the EU and China, it is equally necessary and important to explore China's nature as an international actor and an interlocutor for the EU. To this end, it is required to look through China's bureaucratic structure and find out its evolving nature as an international actor.

Chapter 1 illustrated the numerous diversities within the EU. As a supranational entity, it is understandable that the EU would have multiple dimensions in terms of its initiatives and interests. When we look at China, it might seem to make intuitive sense to consider China to be a unitary state actor, or even one where policy is driven by the paramount leader. The truth, however, is much more complicated than that. The preferences and objectives of the central party state leadership are clearly very important, but this does not mean that there is only one interest and objective underlying China's foreign policy, and that all actors are aligned behind this single goal. There is bounded plurality both in the decision-making processes and, in the way that various Chinese actors behave in the international arena. In light of this, the first and most important task for this chapter is to identify actors and their competences in China's foreign policy making.

The second task of this chapter is to explore China's evolving nature as an international actor. Undoubtedly, China has experienced dramatic social and economic changes in the past few decades, and its role in the international society has changed accordingly. Meanwhile, the transformation of China's nature has resulted in certain impacts on the quality of the EU-China relationship. As will be discussed in chapter 5, this relationship changes along with the variations of the EU and China's role identities. This chapter, however, intends to explore the impacting factors in the evolution of China's nature as an international actor.

2.2 Actors and Competences in China's Foreign Policy

Chapter 1 illustrated the diverse actors, and their competences, within the EU. Therefore, it is equally necessary to reveal the mechanism of China's foreign policy making. Specifically, the questions to be addressed in this section is: who are the actors in China's foreign policy making, and what are their competences?

It is well known that the Chinese political regime is a single party system. As will be shown in section 4.3.1, the Communist Party of China (CPC) enjoys an exclusive leadership, and thus has supreme power to define foreign policies. But does it mean that China's foreign policy making is dictatorial in nature?

This section argues that China's foreign policy making is much more complicated; it has multiple actors with diverse interests. In order to understand the mechanism of foreign policy making and the competences of each of its actors, this section describes the structure of China's foreign policy making as taking the form of a pyramid. At the top is the Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, which decides the strategic dimensions of China's diplomacy. It stands at the top of the system, and thus has the most extensive power but the smallest size.

Figure 2. The structure of China's foreign policy making



In the middle is the Central Foreign Affairs Commission (CFAC), formerly known as the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG), which consists of ministers or directors from multiple departments. It is a supra-ministerial organ that is in charge of consultation and coordination among the relevant departments. It is assisted by the Office of Foreign Affairs, which serves as a bridge to transmit directions and proposals between the top and bottom of the structure. Apart from this vertical function, the CFAC and the Office of Foreign Affairs also plays a role of coordinator amongst departments at the horizontal level. This function is critical in the sense that China's diplomacy has two systems. On the one hand, is the party system, consisting of the departments under the Central Committee of the CPC, such as the International Department (formerly named the International Liaison Department), and the Publicity Department.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, is the state system, consisting of departments under the State Council, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, the National Development and Reform Commission, and so forth. On some occasions, the competences of the two systems merge, overlap and even conflict with each other. The existence of the CFAC coordinates these two systems by blurring the boundaries between the two. The divisions between the two systems are rather indistinct in the CFAC, as it consists of members from both systems.

The bottom section consists of the diverse organs mentioned in the previous paragraph. They are the executive actors who form the basis of implementing foreign policies, and are also capable of uploading their initiatives, proposals and interests to the top level through channels such as the Office of Foreign Affairs. The actors at this level have different roles and competences, and their various influences on foreign policy are not necessarily equal. Departments involved in the CFAC - such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and the International Department - are closer to the core of the policy making circle, and have sufficient access to directly affect policy making. Compared to these departments, provinces and state-owned enterprises have different impacts on policy making, as their interests are mainly commercial or limited to the local level. With regards to think tanks, despite the rise of their importance, they have a relatively marginal

¹⁰⁸ It is also known as the Propaganda Department, but it is named "the Publicity Department" on its official website, available at <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/206972/206981/8223996.html>, accessed 8 March 2018.

impact on policy making as they can only influence it in an indirect manner.¹⁰⁹ Following such a pyramidal structure, this section will illustrate the roles of these actors and their competences in the process of China's foreign policy making. A number of studies quoted above demonstrate the structure of China's foreign policy making as a "core-margins" format,¹¹⁰ but here I believe the vertical dimension is very important, because the hierarchy has great implications in China's political system.

2.2.1 Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, the Leading Power

In the Party-State system, the CPC has the power to define China's foreign policy. In the hierarchical structure of the Party, the Central Committee is, according to the Party Constitution, the highest leading body. The Constitution also clearly states that 'only the Central Committee of the Party has the power to make decisions on major national policies'.¹¹¹ In practice, the Central Committee vest its power in the Political Bureau when the Committee is not in session, which is most of the time.¹¹² The Political Bureau comprises a group of members who hold leadership positions in major departments, agencies and provinces. Hence the Political Bureau consists of those most powerful people in China who have the power to discuss national affairs and policies. At the top of the structure is the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, which determines the strategic dimensions of foreign policy and makes final decisions on diplomatic matters. At the very top, the General Secretary of the Central Committee is the leader of the Party, and who also assumes the posts of the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), which makes him the paramount leader who enjoys the ultimate power in China's political system.

¹⁰⁹ Wang Cungang, "当今中国的外交政策: 谁在制定? 谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)", *Foreign Affairs Review* 2, (2012): 1-18; Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, "Research institutions and academia," in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China* (Solna: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2010), 34-40.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, for example.

¹¹¹ Article 10(3) and 16, "Full text of Constitution of Communist Party of China", available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_136725945.htm, accessed 8 March 2018.

¹¹² The Central Committee only normally meets in full plenary session once a year (though sometimes twice) for around four days each time.

The Standing Committee usually consists of 7-9 people. The principal members hold the positions of the General Secretary of the Party (the head of the Party), the Premier (the head of the State Council), the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (the head of the parliamentary body), the Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (the head of the political advisory body and the alliance of various parties), and the First Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC (the principal secretary of the executive body of the Political Bureau). In different generations of the leadership, it contains positions such as the Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC (the head of the internal discipline control body), the Director of the External Propaganda Leading Small Group (the official who is actually in charge of the Party's publicity), the Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the CPC (the head of the enforcement authorities), the Vice President of the PRC, the First Vice Premier and the First Vice Chairman of the CMC.¹¹³

As we can see, the Standing Committee's power covers all the areas of the Chinese political system. The preferences and objectives of the Standing Committee will be put into the Political Report at the National Congress of the CPC, and will be seen as the guiding principles for future diplomatic work. In this sense, the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau outlines the nature of China's foreign policy; it sets the overall objectives and the directions for all other foreign policy activity.

2.2.2 The CFAC and the Office of Foreign Affairs, the Coordinator

In the middle of the Chinese diplomatic structure, the CFAC and its executive body, the Office of Foreign Affairs, play the role of coordinator. Before introducing the CFAC and the Office of Foreign Affairs, it is essential to note the system of China's foreign policy making,

¹¹³ In different sessions, the numbers and positions of the Standing Committee members could vary. Specific details on these members' names and positions can be found via these three links below, "The CPC'S organs and leaderships in each session (1st-17th)", *CNTV*, available at <http://news.cntv.cn/special/lijielingdao/shiqida/index.shtml>; "Profiles of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC", *Xinhua Net*, available at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/18/n/2012/1115/c350826-19590370.html>; "Profiles of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC", *Xinhua Net*, available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/19cpcnc/2017-10/25/c_1121856249.htm, accessed 10 March 2018.

and the nature of its diplomacy, which explains why the CFAC and the Office of Foreign Affairs are middle level functional coordinators.

China's foreign policy, as discussed above, has diversified considerably since the reform and opening up in 1978. The scope of diplomacy is no longer confined to security and politics but has expanded to the realms of commerce, climate change, energy, culture, and so on. The expansion of the scope of its foreign policy means that China's international interactions require input from multiple fields of expertise, and therefore has drawn various departments into the process of foreign policy making.

As a Party-State, China's diplomacy has a party system and a state system. The two systems have separate departments and respective competences, but meanwhile, the division between these two systems is somewhat indistinct. There are overlapping competences between the two, and there are inter-departmental staff appointments.¹¹⁴ The CFAC is the very organ that blurs the boundary between the two systems, and the bridge that coordinates various departments.

To understand the CFAC's role as a coordinator, it is important to consider the composition of its staff. It is chaired by the President, and the Vice President or the Premier is the deputy head. Exact names of other members are normally hidden from being exposed by the media, but according to open resources, the rest of the members include, the State Councillor who is in charge of foreign affairs, ministers and directors from the MFA, the MOFCOM, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of State Security, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, the State Council Information Office, the Taiwan Affairs Office, the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, the International Department, the Publicity Department, and the CMC.¹¹⁵ In March 2018, the CPC reformed several organs of

¹¹⁴ For example, Dai Bingguo was the Minister of the International Department from 1997 to 2003, then he was appointed the Deputy Minister of the MFA from 2003 to 2008. This inter-departmental appointment gave him rich diplomatic experiences in dealing with various kinds of countries. After 2008, he became the State Councillor who was in charge of foreign affairs. This kind of experience can also be found in careers of other Chinese diplomats such as Ji Pengfei, Song Tao and numerous ambassadors.

¹¹⁵ Gong Li, Men Honghua and Sun Dongfang, "中国外交决策机制变迁研究 (1949-2009 年) (China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism: Changes and Evolution since 1949)", *World Economics and Politics*

the Central Committee. The former FALSG was re-designated as the CFAC, and the associated official report revealed a few of the names of individuals on the Commission. Xi remained the head of the Commission, the Premier Li Keqiang took over the position of deputy head, and the Vice-President Wang Qishan was named as a member of the Commission.¹¹⁶

As we can see, the CFAC comprises members from both the party system and the state system. The International Department, the Publicity Department, and the CMC are organs in the party system, whilst the others are organs of the State Council. They all have different competences in their own domains, but in the CFAC the division between the two systems is rather indistinct – they work together to ensure that foreign policy is coherent.

Based on the discussion above, the CFAC's function can be summarised as comprising two major roles. First, the diversity of its staff composition means that the CFAC covers nearly all the major aspects of the foreign affairs. Hence it is able to consult various departments and integrate the relevant expertise into a comprehensive foreign policy.¹¹⁷ The CFAC provides a platform for the ministers to upload their preferences and initiatives, which could be coordinated at a supra-ministerial level. Second, the members of the group are all leaders in their respective departments, which means they have the power to download foreign policy from the top level and oversee its implementation. Their authorities ensure that the policies from the central leading circles can be successfully transmitted down in a vertical dimension.

Whilst the CFAC assembles the top leaders from various departments, its nature is more that of a joint committee, and it needs to be assisted to do specific jobs. Built on this purpose, the

11, (2009): 53; Wang Cungang, “当今中国的外交政策: 谁在制定? 谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)”, 4-5; Alice Miller, “The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups”, *China Leadership Monitor*, 26 Fall 2008:8-10.

¹¹⁶ Xinhua, “Xi stresses centralized, unified leadership of CPC Central Committee over foreign affairs”, 15 May 2018, available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/15/c_137181045.htm, accessed 20 May 2018.

¹¹⁷ Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, “The Communist Party of China”, in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, 5-7.

Office of Foreign Affairs is the direct executive organ of the CFAC. As a coordinator, the Office of Foreign Affairs' competences include:¹¹⁸

- a) To investigate the international situation, study major issues in foreign policies and diplomatic managements, and propose appropriate advice in these regards.
- b) To organise meetings for the CFAC, and carry out the decisions made at such meetings by coordinating with other organs.
- c) To draft and amend the nationwide ordinance in terms of foreign affairs on behalf of the Central Committee, and to examine the foreign policies made by other organs of the Party, the State Council and local governments.
- d) To process the requests and reports on foreign affairs, which are made by other organs of the Party, the State Council and local governments, and deliver them to the CFAC and the State Council.
- e) To undertake other mandates given by the CFAC and the State Council.

Similar to the CFAC, this Office also functions vertically and horizontally. First, it works as an information provider for the decision makers by filtering domestic messages and observing international circumstances. Second, it deals with nearly all the domestic actors who participate in foreign affairs. As the office of the CFAC, it represents a highly convenient means by which to communicate across diverse departments, and as a 'delegate' of the Central Committee, it has the capacity and authority to coordinate these actors.

Officially, the Office of Foreign Affairs is a department directly under the Central Committee.¹¹⁹ However, as shown by the last two competences above, it answers to both the CFAC and the State Council. An important reason for this is that the Director of this Office - Yang Jiechi (2013–2018), preceded by Dai Bingguo (2005–2013) - has a dual identity; he is a member of the Central Committee and, simultaneously, a State Councillor. These two

¹¹⁸ China Internet Information Center, "The Office of Foreign Affairs and its competences", available at http://www.china.com.cn/cpc/2011-04/15/content_22369387.htm, accessed 14 March 2018.

¹¹⁹ People's Daily Online, "The departments under the CPC Central Committee", available at <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/206972/206981/8223996.html>, accessed 15 March 2018.

identities make the person in this post the closest assistant to the paramount leader,¹²⁰ and ranks higher than ministers, so he has the authority to supervise foreign affairs at a supra-ministerial level.¹²¹

2.2.3 Influential Actors in Foreign Policy Making

Beneath the CFAC and the Office of Foreign Affairs, influential actors in China's foreign policy making can be divided into three categories:

- a) The ministries and departments in the central government and the Party, in addition to the People's Liberation Army (PLA). They have close access to the foreign policy-making circle, and sometimes are the policy makers themselves.
- b) The local governments and state-owned enterprises. Under the reform and opening policy, many local governments have developed their international competences, and established relations with foreign actors. Driven by the 'Going out' strategy, state-owned enterprises have developed overseas interests in their engagement with the world. They have particular interests and initiatives in foreign affairs.
- c) Think tanks. They have increasing influence in contemporary China, but compared to the actors above, their roles in policy making are relatively marginal.

2.2.3.1 Ministries, Departments, and the PLA

The Party System

The International Department is the prominent organ that runs interactions and build relations with political parties in other countries. Conventionally, it plays an important role in China's interactions with the Communist countries such as North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. Today, the scope of the CPC's party diplomacy has expanded from Communist parties to friendly parties in developing countries, Socialist parties and Capitalist parties in developed

¹²⁰ Wang Cungan, “当今中国的外交政策:谁在制定?谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)”, 5-6.

¹²¹ Since the 13th National People's Congress, Foreign Minister Wang Yi has replaced Yang Jiechi as the State Councillor. But Yang remains as the Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs and still enjoys a close tie with the paramount leader.

countries.¹²² Remarkably, it has established relations with more than 600 parties and organizations in more than 160 countries.¹²³ The inter-party relations has become an important component of China's diplomacy, and the International Department has become a vital channel between the CPC and other parties.

Along with China's growing involvement in the world, greater importance has been attached to external propaganda for the purposes of strengthening China's 'soft power' and improving its image. In light of this, the External Publicity Group of the Central Committee (re-designated as the External Publicity Office of the Central Committee in 1993) was established on 8 April 1980 by the Publicity Department of the CPC; thus, it is an organ within the party system.¹²⁴ In 1991, it was merged with the State Council Information Office, which is an organ within the state system. The two organs here are an excellent example of the blurred nature of the boundary between the party and state systems. Because they are actually identical in terms of competences and organizations, they share the same responsibilities and staff, and the Director of the State Council Information Office is also usually the Deputy Director of the Publicity Department.¹²⁵ It is called 'one institution with two names' in Chinese political discourse,¹²⁶ this *single* organ belongs to both the Central Committee and the State Council, but only differs depending on when it is propagating the party's information, or the government's.

¹²² Wang Cungang, "当今中国的外交政策:谁在制定?谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)", 6.

¹²³ See the Department Profile at <http://www.idcpc.org.cn/gymb/wbjj/>, accessed 12 March 2018.

¹²⁴ State Commission Office of Public Sectors Reform, "Historical Summary of the CPC Central Committee organs", *Chinese Institutional Organization Net*, available at http://www.scopsr.gov.cn/zlzx/zlzxlyg/201203/t20120323_35157_7.html, accessed 13 March 2018.

¹²⁵ It is believed that the director of the External Propaganda Office/ State Council Information Office reports to the director of the Leading Small Group on Propaganda and Ideological Work, who is conventionally a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau. See David Shambaugh, "China's propaganda system: Institutions, processes and efficacy", *The China Journal* 57, (2007): pp.25-58. Please note, the Leading Small Group on Propaganda and Ideological Work is NOT the External Propaganda Group of the Central Committee, the former takes control of the general propaganda works on both internal and external scopes. Considering the ranks and power of the director, it is at a higher level comparing to the External Propaganda Group, but it is often mistaken by researchers.

¹²⁶ China Internet Information Center, "State Bureaus administered by Ministries or Commissions", available at http://www.china.org.cn/china/leadership/2013-03/11/content_28206251.htm, accessed 13 March 2018.

The State System

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The principle department in the diplomatic system is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). It acts as the executive body to implement foreign policies, and deals with government to government diplomatic interactions. It is argued by some observers that the MFA's power in China's diplomatic system has declined in last few administrations because the Foreign Minister's rank in China's political hierarchy has been declining.¹²⁷ In the early period of the PRC, the post of Foreign Minister was held by prestigious leaders such as Zhou Enlai (the Premier) and Chen Yi (Vice Premier and Vice President of the CMC), and the succeeding Foreign Ministers all held concurrent positions as the Vice Premier or the State Councillor until 1998. After that, the Foreign Minister did not concurrently hold any supra-ministerial position, and became subordinate to the Vice Premier or the State Councillor.¹²⁸

The explanation for the elevation of a higher 'supervisor' above the MFA lies in the expanded scope of China's international activities. As mentioned in section 2.2.2, the nature of China's international relations has fundamentally changed, and the priority of the country's strategy has switched to economic development. Consequently, 'low politics', such as commerce, culture, climate change and so on, have increasingly occupied the foreign affairs bureaucracy's agenda. Thus, it needs a supra-ministerial supervisor to coordinate various interests.

The increased number of departments in the foreign policy-making process has diluted the MFA's influence. In order to keep foreign policies professional, the policy-making process needs to be associated other departments and make full use of their expertise in specific areas.

¹²⁷ Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, "The State Council", in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, 8; Wang Cungang, "当今中国的外交政策:谁在制定?谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)", 7.

¹²⁸ For example, the four Foreign Ministers after 1998, Tang Jiaxuan (1998-2003), Li Zhaoxing (2003-2007), Yang Jiechi (2007-2013) and Wang Yi (2013-2018) are all under the leadership of the then Vice Premier or State Councillor, Qian Qichen (1998-2003, Vice Premier), Tang Jiaxuan (2003-2008, promoted as the State Councillor after resigned from the Foreign Minister), Dai Bingguo (2008-2013, State Councillor) and Yang Jiechi (2013-2018, promoted as the State Councillor after resigned from the Foreign Minister). But a new adaptation in the protocol is that Wang Yi has been promoted as the State Councillor while he is still the Foreign Minister at the 13th National People's Congress, see the report at http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/2018-03/19/content_5275477.htm, assessed 19 March 2018. It might suggest that the MFA has been again granted more power to perform and coordinate.

Meanwhile, nearly all the ministries in the State Council have their own agencies to address particular international affairs.¹²⁹ Therefore, it is almost inevitable that there is competition or conflict among diverse dimensions of their various interests. Furthermore, when a case is critical to the national strategy and requires specific expertise, another department will stand out and have a greater say in this issue. Correspondingly, the MFA will have to abdicate their leading position and play a secondary role. For instance, it was noticed that in the Climate Summits, the Chinese delegation was led by the NDRC, whose officers were the head and the chief negotiator of the delegation, and the MFA officials only played a limited role as delegation members.¹³⁰

The Ministry of Commerce

Along with China's economic development and commercial activities at the global stage, the role of the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) has become increasingly important in China's foreign policy making. It is responsible for formulating strategies of international trade and economic cooperation, negotiating trade and economic issues with international actors, supervising inward and outward investments, and administering China's foreign aid to other regions.¹³¹

Given its competences in shaping trade policies, the appearance of the MOFCOM in China's foreign economic activities is becoming increasingly evident. The MOFCOM is the prominent negotiator in issues such as foreign anti-dumping, countervailing and safeguard investigations. In addition to resolving trade disputes, it also has its own international and regional departments dealing with economic cooperation and research. There are, for example, the Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Department of European Affairs, Department of Asian Affairs, Department of American and Oceanian Affairs, and so forth. Apart from their duties to establish bilateral and regional economic

¹²⁹ Gong Li, Men Honghua and Sun Dongfang, "中国外交决策机制变迁研究 (1949-2009 年) (China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism: Changes and Evolution since 1949)", p.52.

¹³⁰ Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, "The State Council", in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, 8-9; Wang Cungan, "当今中国的外交政策:谁在制定?谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)", 8.

¹³¹ See the MOFCOM's mission at <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/column/mission2010.shtml>, accessed 22 March 2018.

cooperation, they are also responsible for conducting economic and commercial relations with countries who have not established diplomatic relations with China.¹³² Hence they play an important role in bridging relationships between China and those countries. More importantly, this is an area where the MOFCOM can function, but the official foreign affairs channel has limited power, thus making the MOFCOM a distinct actor in China's foreign policy making.

It is a major actor in many areas where is not only related to Chinese interests, but also connected with world economic interests. For instance, it is a powerful actor in determining China's currency exchange rate policy,¹³³ and a major department managing China's outward investment around the world.¹³⁴ It also plays a significant role in China's strategies towards Africa. Along with the Export-Import Bank of China, the MOFCOM provides grants, concessional loans, and operates investments in African countries.¹³⁵ These forms of economic cooperation and aid have largely defined the content of China-Africa relations. In this relationship, the MOFCOM has more competences and resources to define and implement policies and programmes, and it is therefore believed that the MOFCOM's influence that of the MFA in building the China-Africa relationship.¹³⁶

To sum up, the MOFCOM is one of the most crucial actors in shaping China's commercial policy and economic cooperation. Considering the overriding importance of the economy in China's national strategy, the MOFCOM represents an influential power in the circle of China's foreign policy making. In the case of EU-China relations, the MOFCOM plays a critical role in negotiating agreements, ensuring cooperation and resolving commercial conflicts.

¹³² See the department's functions at <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/departments/ozs2/>, accessed 24 March 2018.

¹³³ David A. Steinberg and Shih C. Victor. "Interest group influence in authoritarian states: The political determinants of Chinese exchange rate policy", *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 11 (2012): 1405-1434.

¹³⁴ Luo Yadong, Xue Qiuzhi, and Han Binjie, "How emerging market governments promote outward FDI: Experience from China", *Journal of world business* 45, no. 1 (2010): 68-79.

¹³⁵ Deborah Brautigam, "Chinese development aid in Africa: What, where, why, and how much", in Jane Golley and Ligang Song (eds.), *Rising China: global challenges and opportunities*, 2011, ANU E Press, p.204.

¹³⁶ Lucy Corkin, "Redefining Foreign Policy Impulses toward Africa: The Roles of the MFA, the MOFCOM and China Exim Bank", *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 40, no. 4 (2011): 61-90.

The National Development and Reform Commission

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) is a body that manages strategies for China's macroeconomic developments. Its functions range from regulating the medium- and long-term national economy to monitoring domestic and social developments.¹³⁷ When foreign affairs are connected with the nation's economic matters or development layouts, the NDRC has the authority to involve itself in this process and have a significant impact on the associated decisions. For example, and as has already been noted above, the NDRC headed China's negotiation on climate change, as this issue concerned domestic energy emission and the utilization of resources. It also has its own Department of Climate Change and Department of International Cooperation to deal with international actors regarding climate change issues.

Under Xi's government, the NDRC implemented a set of new responsibilities in terms of the planning and implementation of the Belt and Road initiative, along with other departments.¹³⁸ The chairman of the NDRC is also the Director of the Office of the Belt and Road Initiative Leading Small Group.¹³⁹

Furthermore, the NDRC has the power to administrator inward and outward investment by defining the measures and areas that are appropriate and accessible for the investment to go into. For example, in December 2017, the NDRC issued the Administrative Measures for Overseas Investments by Enterprises, which tightened the Chinese outbound investment by restricting investments in specific countries and domains.¹⁴⁰ In coordination with the MOFCOM, the NDRC issued the Special Administrative Measures (Negative List) for Foreign Investment Access, which (re)defined the domains the foreign capitals could gain access to.¹⁴¹ In terms of China's economic actives and relations at the international level, the

¹³⁷ See the NDRC's main functions at <http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/mfndrc/>, accessed 2 April 2018.

¹³⁸ See the Chinese version of the Department of International Cooperation's main function at <http://wss.ndrc.gov.cn/jgsz/>, accessed 2 April 2018. The English version is available at <http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/mfdic/>, but the new functions have not been added into the English text.

¹³⁹ Xinhua, "China sets up leading team on Belt and Road initiative", 29 March 2015, available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/29/c_134107435.htm, accessed 2 April 2018.

¹⁴⁰ See the Administrative Measures for Overseas Investments by Enterprises at http://www.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201712/t20171226_871563.html, accessed 4 April 2018.

¹⁴¹ See the "Order of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China No.18 of 2018 on Special Administrative

NDRC is a key actor who has the power to set grand strategic policies and guidance for other departments.

Other Agencies

The People's Bank of China (PBC) has been having an increasing impact on China's foreign policy. As the central bank, it has the authority to set the rules for China's monetary policies and financial markets.¹⁴² The Renminbi exchange rate has huge implications for China's export-oriented economy, as well as China's trade with other international economies.

Therefore, the appreciation of the Renminbi has frequently been targeted as a topic in China's diplomacy with others, and the PBC's policies in this regard are critical to shaping China's international economic relations. However, these decisions are not dictated by the PBC alone as it still faces pressure from other departments. For example, the PBC and the MOFCOM held opposing positions on exchange rate reform, with the PBC preferring a looser grip whilst MOFCOM argued for the status quo.¹⁴³

The PBC, and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE), are the key actors in the realm of the foreign exchange reserves. The former PBC governor, Zhou Xiaochuan, advocated the super-sovereign reserve currency and the re-distribution of the Special Drawing Right (SDR).¹⁴⁴ In the following years, the Chinese government promoted the internationalisation of the Renminbi and, in 2016, the Renminbi finally joined the SDR, which is seen as a big step on its path to internationalisation. Despite this, the road to achieve the Renminbi's internationalisation will not be easy as the PBC faces opposing voices from bodies with relatively conservative stances, such as the Ministry of Finance, the NDRC, state commercial banks and various state-owned enterprises.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the PBC (and the

Measures (Negative List) for Foreign Investment Access (2018 Edition)" at <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/policyrelease/aaa/201807/20180702765903.shtml>, accessed 4 April 2018.

¹⁴² See the PBC's major functions at <http://www.pbc.gov.cn/english/130712/index.html>, accessed 5 April 2018.

¹⁴³ Keith Bradsher, "Chinese officials wrestle publicly over approach to currency", *The New York Times*, 26 March 2010, accessed 5 April 2018 via Europresse.

¹⁴⁴ Zhou Xiaochuan, "关于改革国际货币体系的思考 (Thoughts on the reform of the international monetary system)", People's Bank of China, 23 March 2009, available at http://www.china-un.org/chn/zt/g20_london/t554936.htm, accessed 5 April 2018.

¹⁴⁵ Yang Jiang, "The Limits of China's Monetary Diplomacy", in *The Great Wall of Money : Power and Politics in China's International Monetary Relations*, eds. Eric Helleiner and Jonathan Kirshner (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014), 156-183.

SAFE) has contributed significantly to China's monetary diplomacy and made a number of achievements in regional monetary cooperation in East Asia.¹⁴⁶

With the rise of China's attention on the establishment of its soft power, greater importance has become attached to cultural diplomacy in recent years. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education are the major actors in promoting the cultural diplomacy. Led by the Ministry of Culture, a series of Chinese Cultural Years have taken place around the world. For instance, there were China-France Cultural Year Exchange from 2003 to 2005, the Chinese Cultural Year in Germany in 2012, in the UK in 2015, and in Mexico in 2017.

Affiliated with the Ministry of Education, the Hanban is an agency to promote the Chinese language across the world, and is also known as the headquarters of the worldwide Confucius Institutes, which are responsible for providing Chinese language teaching and introducing Chinese culture worldwide. While the Confucius Institutes have made China's profile more apparent in the world, some of them have also drawn criticism on the grounds that they are agents of China's propaganda and affect academic freedom in recipient countries.¹⁴⁷ For this chapter, whether they are positively received or not is somewhat irrelevant; what matters is that they have become firm parts of China's diplomacy. They have supplemented the channels of China's public diplomacy,¹⁴⁸ and those ministries behind them have risen as important actors in China's foreign policy making process.

The PLA

The role of the military in China's foreign policy making is hotly debated. As a part of 'high politics', military security is certainly an important topic in foreign policy. In the early stages of the PRC, many of its diplomats had originally served in the military forces. The first three Foreign Ministers (including Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi and Ji Pengfei) had long military

¹⁴⁶ Li Wei, "金融外交在中国的兴起 (The Rise of China's Financial Diplomacy)", *World Economics and Politics* 2, (2013): 77-98; Yung Chul Park, "RMB internationalization and its implications for financial and monetary cooperation in East Asia", *China & World Economy* 18, no. 2 (2010): 1-21.

¹⁴⁷ The Economist, "Confucius says", 13 September 2014, available at <https://www.economist.com/china/2014/09/13/confucius-says>, accessed 7 April 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Zhang Qingmin, "全球化环境下的中国文化外交 (China's Cultural Diplomacy in the Age of Globalization)", *Foreign Affairs Review* 1, (2006): 36-43.

backgrounds. Furthermore, there were 11 ‘general ambassadors’, who had been selected from the military, and transformed into ambassadors.¹⁴⁹

Observers debate the military’s role in the foreign policy making as they focus on the PLA’s presence in the power system, namely the Political Bureau. Many have noticed that the PLA has lost its seats in the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau since 1997 when Admiral Liu Huaqing retired,¹⁵⁰ indicating that the PLA’s influence in foreign policy making has begun to decline. However, if we take a review back to the late 20th century, after the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, the regime was far from being stable, and there is no such convention at the time that the Standing Committee had to contain a military member.¹⁵¹ In fact, the number of military leaders in the Political Bureau was quite stable since 1987. There are at least two military representatives – normally the two Vice-Chairmen of the CMC – in the Political Bureau, guaranteeing the existence of the channels that allow for the upload of military-related interests. Moreover, the General Secretary of the CPC is also the Chairman of the CMC, where this overlapping identity enables him to coordinate the interests of the state and the military.

The influence of the PLA on foreign policy is issues-based rather than holistic; they generally only become involved when the issue is relevant to national security or military affairs. It is believed that some voices from the military tend to make assertive propositions for a hard-line policy on grand strategies and territorial disputes,¹⁵² especially on the Taiwan Strait issues, where the PLA represents the possibility of the use of military force against Taiwan’s

¹⁴⁹ They were sent to countries who established diplomatic relationship with the PRC right after its establishment, including the Soviet Union, Sweden, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, India, the East Germany, North Korea and Pakistan.

¹⁵⁰ Jean-Pierre Cabestan, “China’s foreign-and security-policy decision-making processes under Hu Jintao”, *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 38, no. 3 (2009): 72-75; Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, “The People’s Liberation Army”, in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, 12-16; Lai, Hongyi, and Su-Jeong Kang, “Domestic bureaucratic politics and Chinese foreign policy”:305-306; Michael D. Swaine, “China’s assertive behavior part three: the role of the military in foreign policy”, *China Leadership Monitor*, 2012, 36(6), 1-17.

¹⁵¹ Between 1987 and 1992, no one in the 13th Standing Committee had military background.

¹⁵² Jean-Pierre Cabestan, “China’s foreign-and security-policy decision-making processes under Hu Jintao”, p.73; Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, “The People’s Liberation Army”, in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, 13; Wang Cungang, “当今中国的外交政策:谁在制定?谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)”, 9.

independence. Regarding Taiwan, the issuing of the Anti-Secession Law (ASL) in 2005 was seen as a result of the military's hard-line stance on Taiwan.¹⁵³

In 2003, the PLA issued the Regulations on Political Work, which emphasised three forms of warfare, namely media warfare, psychological warfare and legal warfare.¹⁵⁴ Legal warfare, as interpreted by Chinese military scholars and the US Office of the Secretary of Defense, was to use domestic and international law to expose the antagonist's illegal actions and to claim the legal high ground, which could then be applied to obtain international support to compress the opponent's operational space.¹⁵⁵ The ASL was thereby considered a consequence of the legal warfare and an instrument employed by China to deter Taiwan's move towards independence. The influence of the Anti-Secession Law had gone beyond the Taiwan Strait and raised concern amongst Western powers. It made the US more vigilant with regards to China's regional policies, and complicated the EU's decision on lifting the arms embargo on China. As will be shown in chapter 6, from 2003 to 2005, China had made considerable effort to persuade the EU to lift the embargo. The time at which the ASL was adopted was coincident with the moment when the EU had been almost convinced to lift the embargo, with consequence that the decision was then postponed. This case shows that China's foreign policy is not unitary; on the contrary, it has multiple actors and multifaceted dimensions and sometimes, as this case reveals, one dimension takes priority over, or at least conflicts with, others. Regarding the details of the arms embargo issue, the US's attitude and the EU's hesitation will be further discussed in the case study in chapter 6. What is important here is that military decisions can have significant impacts on China's foreign policy and international relations.

To some extent, the PLA is also an autonomous actor in foreign affairs, as it has its own

¹⁵³ You Ji, "China's anti-secession law and the risk of war in the Taiwan Strait", *Contemporary Security Policy* 27, no. 2 (2006): 237-257; Chunjuan Nancy Wei, "China's Anti-Secession Law and Hu Jintao's Taiwan Policy", *Yale Journal of International Affairs* 5 (2010): 112.

¹⁵⁴ Article 18, Chapter 2, "The notification regarding the Regulations on Political Work of the PLA that is approved by the Central Committee of the CPC", 5 December 2003, available at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/71380/102565/182142/10993467.html>, accessed 15 April 2018.

¹⁵⁵ Fan Gaoyue, "Three warfares accelerate the victory of wars", *环球时报(Global Times)*, 4 March 2005, p.10; Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress – Military and Security Developments involving the People's Republic of China 2011*, P.26.

Office for International Military Cooperation to manage military exchanges and cooperation. When the PLA engages with public and international military representatives, these proceed under the auspices of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). In fact, the MOD is merely a department of the State Council, and has no authority to lead the army. The leading power remains within the grip of the CMC. The CFAC provides the platform for military leaders and civil bureaucrats to discuss foreign affairs and coordinate their interests.

2.2.3.2 State-owned Enterprises and Local Governments

State-owned Enterprises

State-owned enterprises (SOEs) have been encouraged by the ‘Going out’ strategy and accordingly have expanded their interests to the worldwide stage. The expansion of SOEs has drawn considerable debate as to their roles in China’s foreign policy and international relations. To some observers, being owned by the state implies that the SOEs are directed and controlled by the party-state, that they are the arms of the government and shoulder the mission to implement the country’s geo-economic policies.¹⁵⁶ It has been observed that various Chinese energy companies, especially oil and gas companies, have developed their business in countries with abundant natural resources, though outside the Middle East in places such as Sudan, Angola and Venezuela. Their investments in these areas have increased channels for China’s supply of resources and have thereby enhanced China’s energy security.

However, others argue that the party-state’s control over the SOEs are exaggerated,¹⁵⁷ and SOEs are autonomous actors who are driven mainly by market and economic interests.¹⁵⁸ This profit-oriented motivation could generate the SOEs’ own interests, which might even

¹⁵⁶ Fred Robins, “The uniqueness of Chinese outward foreign direct investment”, *Asian Business & Management* 12, no. 5 (2013): 525-537.

¹⁵⁷ Erica S. Downs, “The fact and fiction of Sino-African energy relations”, *China Security* 3, no.3 (2007): 42-68.

¹⁵⁸ Ruben Gonzalez-Vicente, “Mapping Chinese Mining Investment in Latin America: Politics or Market?”, *The China Quarterly* 209, (2012): 35-58; Wang Cungang, “当今中国的外交政策:谁在制定?谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)”, 10-11.

conflict with national principles.¹⁵⁹ To this extent, SOEs are in part corporatized and independent from Beijing's directives.

In fact, SOEs sometimes play the role of pioneers in China's going out strategy, as they build up diplomatic relations on the basis of trade in natural resources.¹⁶⁰ On some occasions, however, SOEs' investments go to countries with unstable regimes, and in turn investments in those environments require diplomatic assistance to maintain or develop their businesses. To this extent, analysts note that China's diplomacy has been somehow 'kidnapped' by the SOEs' overseas investments.¹⁶¹ In the Sudanese Darfur Crisis, China had to consider the investment that had been projected in the region by the China National Petroleum Corporation, and this became one of the reasons for China's reluctance to interfere in the first place.¹⁶² Again, in light of Chinese national oil companies' intense investment in Iran, China used its diplomatic resources to exclude energy trade from the sanctions imposed on Iran by the UN in 2010. This evidence illustrates how China's foreign policies have indeed been influenced by the activities of SOEs.

According to Chinese diplomats, China initially held a 'business is business' attitude towards its overseas trade.¹⁶³ However, they soon found that commercial interests were inevitably entangled with political elements, thereby affecting China's international relations. Based on the business is business stance, Chinese SOEs' investments in Africa were driven by economic interests, and dealt with regions which could produce profits, regardless of the associated political regimes or societal status. Meanwhile, business activities were aligned with the Chinese government's principle of 'non-interference'. Unlike the Western powers, China's investments, as well as its aid to relevant countries, were not bound by political conditions such as promoting human rights and democracy. 'Not being like the West' was an

¹⁵⁹ Bates Gill, and James Reilly, "The tenuous hold of China Inc. in Africa", *Washington Quarterly*, 30, no. 3 (2007): 37-52.

¹⁶⁰ David Zweig and Bi Jianhai, "China's global hunt for energy", *Foreign affairs* (2005): 25-38.

¹⁶¹ Li Xin, "国有企业'走出去'与当代中国外交海外困局 (State-owned Enterprises 'Going Out' and Overseas Dilemmas of Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy)", *Global Review* 2, (2012): 15-26.

¹⁶² China had then partially changed its stance and actively work with the Sudanese government and international actors to end the crisis, see Erica S. Downs, "The fact and fiction of Sino-African energy relations".

¹⁶³ Howard W. French, "China in Africa: All Trade, With No Political Baggage", *The New York Times*, August 8, 2004, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/08/world/china-in-africa-all-trade-with-no-political-baggage.html>, accessed 17 April, 2018.

appealing feature to some African regimes, especially to those considered ‘rogue countries’ by the West. It saved Chinese companies the associated ‘political costs’ (negotiating about political conditions), and granted them privileged access to African countries’ energy markets. However, the ‘political costs’ were not eliminated but rather transferred to other realms such as China’s image and reputation. The so-called ‘Chinese model’ – particularly in conducting investments without conditions – was accused of undermining the West’s efforts to build African countries with neoliberal norms¹⁶⁴ and, in turn, undermined Chinese efforts to be seen a responsible player in the eyes of Western countries.

Furthermore, the disputes over the SOEs’ behaviour can influence the health of the bilateral relationship, especially in relationships that are largely shaped by economic relations, such as the EU-China relationship. The EU’s anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations into Chinese photovoltaic enterprises have damaged the interests of Chinese photovoltaic companies as well as European photovoltaic retailers. Moreover, the resistance to Chinese enterprises’ overseas operations, mergers and acquisitions are not only for economic reasons, but are often attributed to ‘security reasons’.¹⁶⁵ In this regard, two Chinese telecommunications companies, Huawei and ZTE, have frequently been targeted as risks to US and UK security.¹⁶⁶ Under these circumstances, the MOFCOM or the MFA need to become involved and resolve the associated disputes.

It was demonstrated above that SOEs can have significant impacts on China’s foreign policy, but it is important to avoid understanding their roles from only a single dimension. On the one hand, the SOEs use China’s diplomatic resources to protect their own profitabilities; on the other hand, they are the arms of the Chinese government in terms of implementing the country’s strategies. Chinese national oil companies’ investments in Africa are not merely

¹⁶⁴ Ian Taylor, “Challenge to the global liberal order? The growing Chinese relationship with Africa”, in *Handbook of China’s International Relations*, ed. Shaun Breslin (London: Routledge, 2010), 193-197.

¹⁶⁵ Lee Jones and Zou Yizheng, “Rethinking the role of state-owned enterprises in China’s rise”, *New Political Economy* 22, no. 6 (2017): 743-760; Li Xin, “国有企业‘走出去’与当代中国外交海外困局 (State-owned Enterprises ‘Going Out’ and Overseas Dilemmas of Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy)”, 18-20.

¹⁶⁶ Ken Dilanian, “Top intelligence official says Chinese ZTE cellphones pose security risk to U.S.”, *NBC NEWS*, May 15, 2018, available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/top-intelligence-official-says-chinese-zte-cellphones-pose-security-risk-n874276>, accessed 19 May, 2018; BBC News, “UK criticises security of Huawei products”, available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-44891913>, accessed 28 July, 2018.

profit-seeking activities, but have ultimately served national goals, as they have broadened China's energy supply channels and enhanced its energy security.¹⁶⁷

Additionally, the central government retains control over the SOEs through the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC). The SASAC oversees the operation of 96 SOEs.¹⁶⁸ Besides managing regulations and supervising the capital gains, the SASAC (along with the Organization Department of the CPC) has the ultimate power to appoint the executives of these SOEs,¹⁶⁹ which ensures that the highest decision making levels of these enterprises are under the control of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council. Apart from national SOEs, local SOEs are also major investors in each province, and are themselves controlled by local SASACs.

Local Government

As in a unitary country, diplomatic competence supposedly belongs to the central government. However, there is a trend in China, particularly after the reform and opening up, that local governments actively participate in engagements with the external world. Actors such as provinces and cities contribute to the country's foreign relations and economic activity at the subnational level.

The reason for mentioning the reform and open policy is that it provides two prerequisites through which to facilitate local governments' engagements with actors outside their territorial boundaries. The first prerequisite is the decentralisation of power from central government to local authorities. Local governments' powers were strengthened in the process of reform and were formally supported by the Constitution in 1982, which encouraged local authorities to fully implement their initiative and enthusiasm, and also granted greater responsibilities to their own regional economies, finances, welfare and, even to a limited

¹⁶⁷ Zha Daojiong and Shaun Breslin, "Oiling the wheels of foreign policy? Energy security and China's international relations", in *Handbook of China's International Relations*, ed. Shaun Breslin (London: Routledge, 2010), 64-75.

¹⁶⁸ See the list of SOEs at <http://www.sasac.gov.cn/n2588035/n2641579/n2641645/index.html>, accessed 18 April, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ See the SASAC's function in "what we do" at http://en.sasac.gov.cn/2018/07/17/c_7.htm, accessed 18 April, 2018.

extent, legislature.¹⁷⁰ Meanwhile, local authorities have also been granted greater fiscal freedom, such as the competence to formulate budgets and attract foreign direct investment, which has enhanced local governments' administrative powers and financial autonomy in law.¹⁷¹

The second prerequisite is the internationalisation/globalisation in the process of opening up. Lowering the barriers for international trade has provided considerable opportunities for local governments to pursue their own economic interests. In particular, the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have opened channels for local governments to connect with the world. The interactions between the SEZs and external economies have demonstrated a tight linkage between foreign direct investments and trade, and therefore strengthened local governments' financial autonomy in practice,¹⁷² which has spurred other provinces and cities to imitate.

Local governments' participation in foreign affairs mainly focuses on low politics such as economic cooperation. However, given the significance of economic development within China's political agenda, local governments' economic activities at the subnational level could also shape the country's diplomacy and strategy. In fact, various provinces have used their geographical advantages to contribute substantially to sub-regional cooperation.

For instance, the south-west provinces have played a significant role in China's cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Yunnan has actively participated in the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program (GMS), where it was the co-decision maker and the executive on China's side.¹⁷³ Its neighbour province, Guangxi,

¹⁷⁰ Article 3 and 107, *中华人民共和国宪法 (1982 年)* (*Constitutions of the People's Republic of China (1982)*), available at http://www.npc.gov.cn/wxzl/wxzl/2000-12/06/content_4421.htm, accessed 20 April, 2018.

¹⁷¹ Chen Zhimin, "Coastal Provinces and China's Foreign Policy Making", in *China's Foreign Policy Making: Societal Force and Chinese American Policy*, eds. Su Lin and Hao Yufan (New York: Routledge, 2005): 187-207; Su Changhe, "中国地方政府与次区域合作: 动力, 行为及机制 (Bring Chinese Local Government Back in Sub-regionalization)", *World Economic and Politics* 5, (2010): 4-24.

¹⁷² Shaun Breslin, "Decentralisation, globalisation and China's partial re-engagement with the global economy", *New Political Economy* 5, no. 2 (2000): 205-226.

¹⁷³ Chen Diyu, "云南与'大湄公河次区域经济合作机制' (Yunnan and the 'Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation Program')", *International Review* 6, (2008): 16-21.

also joined the GMS and competed with Yunnan in the program. In addition, Guangxi also played a similar role in the Pan-Beibu (Tonkin) Gulf Economic Cooperation initiative.¹⁷⁴ The north-east provinces, Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning, have carried out vast programs under the China-Russia cooperation program.¹⁷⁵ Even prior the Belt and Road Initiative, Kashi (Kashgar) in Xinjiang established the latest SEZ in 2010, which was intended to tighten the connections, and facilitate trade, with Central Asian countries. In 2015, Xinjiang was defined as the ‘core area’ of the Belt and Road Initiative, which further promoted Xinjiang’s cooperation with Central Asia in terms of infrastructure, transportation and electricity grid construction.¹⁷⁶ Fujian used its geo-economic advantage to build a very profound economic relationship across the Taiwan Strait. These activities, as conducted by the provinces, have promoted China’s cooperation with neighbouring countries to a remarkable extent.

At the city level, Chinese cities have built numerous city-to-city partnerships with cities around the world. Taking Europe, for example, between 1979 and 2018 they established 654 pairs of friendship cities (or the so-called sister city relations).¹⁷⁷ This vast network has carried out large-scope staff exchanges, and has brought cities closer in their cooperation in the realms of tourism, education, agriculture and service. In 2012, China and the EU launched the EU-China Urbanisation Partnership that aimed to achieve sustainable urban development. Between 2013 and 2016, 30 Chinese cities have built partnerships with European cities and implemented concrete projects.¹⁷⁸ These partnerships have deepened EU-China relations at

¹⁷⁴ Yang Yi, “中国外交决策中的地方政府——以广西推动‘泛北部湾区域合作’为例 (Local government in China’s foreign policy making—case study on Guangxi’s promotion on ‘Pan-Beibu Gulf Economic Cooperation’)”, *Theory Monthly* 5, (2016): 110-116.

¹⁷⁵ See the details at Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “中华人民共和国东北地区与俄罗斯联邦远东及东西伯利亚地区合作规划纲要 (Cooperation Outline between the North-East region of the People’s Republic of China and the Far East and East Siberia region of the Russian Federation)”, available at <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/gxh/zlb/smzg/t709754.htm>, accessed 21 April 2018.

¹⁷⁶ Xinhua News, “一带一路核心区明确：新疆成前沿 (Finalising on the core area of the Belt and Road Initiative: Xinjiang becomes the forefront)”, available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-04/01/c_1114842365.htm, accessed 21 April 2018.

¹⁷⁷ China International Friendship Cities Association, “世界各国与我国建立友好城市关系一览表 (List of friendship cities between China and the world)”, available at <http://www.cifca.org.cn/Web/WordGuanXiBiao.aspx>, accessed 22 April 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Chinese National Development and Reform Commission, attachment 1, “国家发展改革委办公厅关于报送中欧城镇化伙伴关系结对子城市和务实合作项目有关材料的通知 (Notification from the NDRC on submitting applications for the Sino-EU Urbanisation Partnership and practical projects)”, available at http://www.ndrc.gov.cn/zcfb/zcfbtz/201612/t20161226_832507.html, accessed 22 April 2018.

the microlevel between cities, but eventually these concrete projects could contribute to consolidating the relationship at a higher level.

Local governments could have an impact on foreign policy making by lobbying through inner formal institutions such as the National People's Congress and the National Congress of the CPC. Observers indicate that some provincial leaders have considerable potential for ascension within the CPC's political hierarchy, and most of the members in the last two Standing Committees of the Political Bureau have had experience in local governance.¹⁷⁹ For example, in the 18th Committee, all the seven members have had provincial experiences. This implies that the local leaders have a certain kind of informal channels through which to impose their personal influences in the making of foreign policy.

It is widely believed that local governments' foreign activities have promoted China's internationalisation, have boosted the country's cooperation with neighbouring countries, and have also consolidated connections with regions such as Europe, Africa, and so forth.¹⁸⁰ Most importantly, the involvement of local governments has contributed to a 'more liberal foreign economic policy', which in turn contributes to a more interdependent and stable relationship with other countries.¹⁸¹ Even though local governments' activities mainly focus on economic issues, the consequences of their behaviour have clear political implications. On the one hand, preserving the long-term development of local economies requires the central government to adopt a relatively cooperative, rather than confrontational, foreign policy when it concerns the local governments' economic security.¹⁸² On the other hand, local governments comply with the principle interests of the country, as they still need political authorisation and sometimes financial support to pursue their own initiatives. So, when the city-city relationship is incompatible with the national interests, the local government is

¹⁷⁹ Chen Zhimin, "Coastal Provinces and China's Foreign Policy Making", 195; Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, "Local government", in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, 32.

¹⁸⁰ Jian Junbo and Chen Zhimin, "中国省份在对非政策中的作用 (China's Provinces in Africa: functions and influences)", *African Studies* 5, (2010): 76-96; Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China's foreign-and security-policy decision-making processes under Hu Jintao", 87; Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, "Local government", in *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, 33;

¹⁸¹ Chen Zhimin, "Coastal Provinces and China's Foreign Policy Making", 204.

¹⁸² Su Changhe, "中国地方政府与次区域合作: 动力, 行为及机制 (Bring Chinese Local Government Back in Sub-regionalization)", 14.

obliged to put the national interests first. For example, the Nanjing government severed its friendship city relationship with Nagoya, Japan, due to Nagoya's Mayor, Takashi Kawamura, making misleading comments about the Nanking Massacre.¹⁸³

2.2.3.3 Think Tanks

Think tanks are having an increasing impact on the government's foreign policy making. The most influential think tanks are directed by central agencies.¹⁸⁴ For example, the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) is a ministerial research organ that is directly subordinate to the State Council. It has various institutions that work on specific realms of international relations and foreign affairs. The Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC (also referred to as the Chinese Academy of Governance since 2018) is an institute that lies directly under the Party; it mainly studies Communism and Chinese politics, and is responsible for training officials for the Party. The China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) is a think tank supervised by the MFA, as is the China Foreign Affairs University. The China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) are affiliated with the Ministry of State Security. Outside Beijing, the Shanghai Institute for International Studies is the most influential think tank under the direction of the Shanghai government. Through the channels connected with the governments, these think tanks can provide policy analysis and recommendations to policy makers.

There are three main approaches through which think tanks can influence the process of policy making. First, think tanks can influence top leaders through the Political Bureau collective study sessions. The Political Bureau collective study sessions is an institution that invites scholars to give lectures to members in the Political Bureau. Since December 2002, there have been 127 sessions, almost one session per month. The lectures cover various aspects of China's development. Among them, there were six sessions that specifically

¹⁸³ Pang Hurui, “外交部: 支持南京‘断交’决定 (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports Nanjing's decision to sever the relationship)”, *新京报 (The Beijing News)*, February 23, 2012, available at <http://yuqing.people.com.cn/GB/210124/17202583.html>, accessed 24 April 2018.

¹⁸⁴ Chen Yuchuan, “可影响高层决策 中国十大‘智库’首次公开亮相 (Influencing top-level policy, China reveals top ten think tanks)”, *人民网 (People's Daily Online)*, available at <http://finance.people.com.cn/GB/1037/5019209.html>, accessed 24 April 2018.

referred to foreign affairs,¹⁸⁵ whilst other sessions were related to comparative studies of the world and China with regards to financial governance, military development, climate change, urbanisation, education, agriculture, and so forth. These lectures are given by experts from diverse think tanks and universities, their huge influences in respect domains make their arguments extremely convincing to the top leaders.

Second, in addition to the lectures, think tanks and scholars can also shape foreign policy through consultation and discussion conferences. The governmental department that carries the majority of this responsibility is the MFA, which establishes policy communities to provide platforms for scholars to discuss foreign policy at the official level. The Foreign Policy Advisory Group and the Public Diplomacy Advisory Panel are two communities that are organised by the MFA which have enlisted top-level scholars in China such as Qin Yaqing, Qu Xing and Yang Jiemian.¹⁸⁶ The Policy Planning Department of the MFA is the particular department that studies the international relations and proposes foreign policies. A number of Chinese scholars claim to have been consulted by this department before foreign policies are drafted.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, two of the interviewees in this thesis have worked in Renmin University and the CICIR, and have been consulted about policies regarding the EU.

Third, there are extensive personal networks that exist between diplomats and scholars in international studies. Staff exchanges between the diplomatic system and academia are not rare, particularly in MFA-affiliated institutes, such as the China Foreign Affairs University and the CIIS. Numerous academics have been dispatched to embassies around the world, and then return to academic institutes to continue their research careers. As opposed to scholars who focus on academic work, these retired diplomats have gained extensive diplomatic

¹⁸⁵ They were “G20 summit and the reform of global governance system” on 27 September 2016; “The pattern and institution of the global governance” on 12 October 2015; “Persisting on the peaceful development” on 28 January 2013; “Promoting the opening policy and securing the national economy” on 28 September 2007; “Economic globalisation and the new characters of the international trade” on 31 May 2005 and “Global environment and China’s national security” on 23 February 2004. See the list of sessions at <http://www.12371.cn/special/lnzzjtxtx/>, accessed 26 April 2018.

¹⁸⁶ Qin Yaqing is the President of China Foreign Affairs University, Qu Xing was the President of the CIIS, and Yang Jiemian was the President of the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies.

¹⁸⁷ Wang Yizhou, “中国外交影响因子探析 (Factor Analysis in China’s Diplomacy)”, *World Economics and Politics* 29, (2009): 15-16.

experience, and can use this experience and their networks to not only give advice, but to some extent ‘direct’ the drafting of foreign policies.¹⁸⁸

Moreover, observers indicate that think tanks seem to be able to contribute to China’s diplomacy from the outside the governmental system.¹⁸⁹ Most of these kinds of think tanks are sponsored by civilians and claim to be independent of the government, such as the Centre for China and Globalization, the Charhar Institute, and the Pangoal Institution. In spite of claiming to independent, they actively work for the government by training officials, carrying out research projects and making policy recommendations. They are particularly sensitive to the hottest topics in China’s political discourse. For instance, all the three think tanks (others include the China Silk Road iValley Research Institute, One Belt and One Road 100 Forum, the China Center for Contemporary World Studies, etc.) have joined the think tank association for the Belt and Road Initiative,¹⁹⁰ and have organised a number of conferences to discuss relevant themes. By debating and disseminating China’s national strategies with worldwide researchers and observers, Chinese think tanks have made a considerable contribution to China’s public diplomacy at the non-governmental level.¹⁹¹

In addition to providing policy advice, think tank members can shape China’s political discourse. Once their suggestions have been accepted by the government, they would then be able to define the discourse at that time. For example, Zheng Bijian, the former Vice Principle of the Party School of the Central Committee, proposed ‘China’s peaceful rise’ in 2003. Due to the debates raised by the concept of ‘China’s rise’, this was changed to ‘China’s peaceful development’ in 2004. Nevertheless, this notion became the main diplomatic principle under Hu Jintao’s government. Furthermore, as will be shown in section 4.3.2.1, the

¹⁸⁸ Sun Zhe, “中国外交思想库：参与决策的角色分析 (The Think Tanks and the Making of Chinese Foreign Policy)”, *Fudan Journal (Social Science)* 4, (2004): 98-104.

¹⁸⁹ Quansheng Zhao, “Policy-making processes of Chinese foreign policy: The role of policy communities and think tanks”, in *Handbook of China’s International Relations*, ed. Shaun Breslin (London: Routledge, 2010), 29-30; Pascal Abb, “China’s Foreign Policy Think Tanks: Institutional Evolution and Changing Roles”, *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 93 (2015): 531-553.

¹⁹⁰ Zhang Lin, “一带一路智库合作联盟成立 (The establishment of the association of think tanks for the Belt and Road initiative)”, *中国网(China Internet Information Center)*, 8 April 2015, available at http://www.china.com.cn/opinion/think/2015-04/08/content_35268485.htm, accessed 29 April 2018.

¹⁹¹ Ke Yinbin, “中国智库如何实现公共外交功能 (How does Chinese think tanks function at the realm of public diplomacy)”, *澎湃(The Paper)*, 12 February 2015, available at https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1302869, accessed 29 April 2018.

academic discussion of ‘hide brightness, nourish obscurity’ and ‘active conduct’ around 2012 re-shaped China’s foreign policy principles at the beginning of Xi Jinping’s regime.

It is important to understand think tanks’ influence in China’s foreign policy making due to their deep connections (official and semi-official) with national departments. While think tanks might sometimes be closely related to the political system in other countries, their connections in the Chinese case mean that they should not really be thought of as independent, outside participants in foreign policy debates; rather, they are very much insiders. They are not merely able to upload their opinions as demonstrated above but can also download information from the top via their interactions with national departments. Accordingly, they get to glimpse the attitudes of policy makers and are very sensitive to the political atmosphere. As a result, their research output could reflect these attitudes and intelligence, and to some extent their opinions could correspond with the government’s policies. This is implication extremely important to the methodology of this thesis, as Chinese think tanks’ idea will be explicitly studied in more detail in chapter 6, whereby I will consult 141 Chinese language materials on EU-China relations. By analysing their content and specific wording, chapter 6 is designed to evaluate the Chinese scholars’ perceptions of the EU and the bilateral relationship at that time.

2.3 The Evolving Nature of China as an International Actor

By examining the actors and their competences in China’s diplomatic system, this chapter demonstrates China’s evolving nature as an international actor. Despite the unitary political regime, China’s diplomatic policy making is not as simple as one might imagine. In fact, it is a rather complicated system with multifaceted dimensions of interests. This section will analyse how China has evolved into such a complex form.

The evolution of China as an international actor occurred over a long time span, which can be attributed to the dramatic transformation of both global and domestic environments. Since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the period to date has witnessed the formation and collapse of the bipolar world, and also the reformation and opening up of China itself. The fact that China still maintains a one-party rule system notwithstanding, this

system is actually less unitary than it used to be. It has adapted to the changes demanded by both internal and external contexts, and has increased the complexity of its foreign policy making.

2.3.1 The External Transformation

The biggest changes in the last few decades were the end of the Cold War and the development of Globalisation. For China, these changes implied a transition in the political agenda from one of high politics to low politics. Back in Mao's era, China was facing severe national security issues, with the very survival of the People's Republic at stake. Not surprisingly, the priorities set in China's foreign policy were geared towards the defence of its national security.

Under Deng Xiaoping, China's principal strategy was to achieve the country's modernisation.¹⁹² Hence the basis of foreign policy changed to the need to build a peaceful environment for China's economic development.¹⁹³ Meanwhile, China had established diplomatic relations with the US and its allies, which consequently reduced the threat from the West and significantly expanded the extent of China's diplomatic relations. In the late 1980s, China restored its relations with the Soviet Union and thus eliminated the security threat on the north. Consequently, the existential challenges to the state that had existed under Mao disappeared.

To some extent, the end of the Cold War provided an atmosphere in which the rivalries between the two blocks were diminished. Even though China still encountered some military confrontations in Yugoslavia, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, it did not let these incidents slow the momentum of its economic development. Furthermore, along with the momentum of the Globalisation and China's increasing involvement in the international

¹⁹² Database of the National Congress of the CPC, “中国共产党第十一届中央委员会第三次全体会议公报 (Bulletin of the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CPC)”, 人民网 (People's Daily Online), available at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64563/65371/4441902.html#>.

¹⁹³ Jisi Wang. "China's search for a grand strategy: A rising great power finds its way." *Foreign Affairs* (2011): 68-79; David Shambaugh, “China engages Asia: reshaping the regional order”, *International security* 29, no. 3 (2005): 64-99.

society, the nature of China's international relations fundamentally changed. Its diplomatic agendas had gone beyond high politics such as security and become increasingly linked with commerce, energy, culture, education, climate change, and so forth.¹⁹⁴

The transition from high politics to low politics has diluted the emphasises on security and military issues, and created a larger sphere for China to take part in. These new domains, due to their specific expertise, require participation from particular departments to generate new agendas for China's politics. For instance, entering the WTO was once a priority task on the list. It required the support and collaboration of multiple departments, and could have taken up a large amount of the national administrative resources. Other issues – such as international trade, foreign investment and climate change – had also gone beyond the competence of the MFA, and needed trans-departmental collaboration to achieve the associated goals. The emergence of these low political topics generated a push from the outside to diversify the actors in China's foreign policy making.

2.3.2 The Internal Reform

Two of the major reforms in foreign policy making have been the decentralisation of the power system and the requirement for specific expertise. Decentralisation has fundamentally altered the situation in China in the sense that the paramount leader holds absolute authority in the making of foreign policies, and the need for professional knowledge has invited various departments into the making of foreign policies.

It is necessary to look back in order to understand the process of decentralisation of the power system. In the era of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader used to play a decisive role in the formation of foreign policy. Under their leadership, foreign policy was largely based on the leader's judgement of the world environment and domestic needs, and

¹⁹⁴ David Lampton, *The Making of Chinese Foreign Policy and Security Policy in an Era of Reform*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 4; Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China's foreign-and security-policy decision-making processes under Hu Jintao", 63-97; Gong Li, Men Honghua and Sun Dongfang, "中国外交决策机制变迁研究 (1949-2009 年) (China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism: Changes and Evolution since 1949)", 53; Lai, Hongyi, and Su-Jeong Kang. "Domestic bureaucratic politics and Chinese foreign policy", *Journal of Contemporary China* 23, no. 86 (2014): 294-313.

their decisions usually shaped the strategic dimensions of China's diplomacy. For instance, Mao evaluated the atmosphere of the Cold War, and accordingly decided to implement the 'lean to one side' policy, allying China with the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁵ Between 1949 and 1966, Mao and Zhou Enlai (sometimes including Liu Shaoqi) were the highest foreign policy makers in China's diplomacy.¹⁹⁶ Specifically, Mao was the top leader who had the power to make any final decision that might be required, whilst Zhou was the Premier and Foreign Minister who had the executive power. Zhou told the ambassadors that 'every little thing matters in diplomacy (*waijiao wu xiaoshi* 外交无小事)', and emphasised the requirement that any diplomatic decisions must be reported to him and gain his instruction. If necessary, he would report to Mao and gain his permission before any given foreign policy was executed.¹⁹⁷ To this extent, China's foreign policy making was then strictly centralised and concentrated under the authority of its top leaders.

In the decade following 1966, the Cultural Revolution in China paralysed its diplomatic system. Since 1978, China had gradually restored order within its administration and started implementing its reform and opening policy. In the early 1980s, based on domestic needs for economic development, and the observation that the tension relating to the Cold War was rapidly declining, Deng made 'hide brightness, nourish obscurity (*tao guang yang hui* 韬光养晦)' the principle of China's foreign policy. The foreign policy making under Deng Xiaoping still had the characteristics of centralisation, but also gradually became more democratic and institutionalised. For instance, disagreements were allowed to be voiced in the discussion among top leaders, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) started to set up a number of institutions such as the Spokesman Institution.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Ding Ming, "Post-War International Relations and the Formation of the 'Lean to One Side' Policy", *Contemporary China History Studies* 2, (2003): 92-99.

¹⁹⁶ Bai Yunzhen, "新中国外交制度的演变与创新 (New China's Evolution and Innovations in Diplomatic Institutions: A State-Society Perspective)", *World Economics and Politics* 9, (2009): 45-56; Gong Li, Men Honghua and Sun Dongfang, "中国外交决策机制变迁研究 (1949-2009 年) (China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism: Changes and Evolution since 1949)", 44-54.

¹⁹⁷ Xu Jingli, *解密中国外交档案 (Decryption on Chinese diplomatic documents)*, (Beijing: Chinese Documentary Press, 2005), p. 102.

¹⁹⁸ Gong Li, Men Honghua and Sun Dongfang, "中国外交决策机制变迁研究 (1949-2009 年) (China's Diplomatic Decision-making Mechanism: Changes and Evolution since 1949)", 51; Song Zhiyan, "试论改革开放以来我国外交决策机制的变化 (Analysing the changes on the institutions of China's foreign policy making since the reform and opening up)", *Southern Forum* 6, (2015):33-40.

Under Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao's administration, China's foreign policy making experienced two major changes. First, the policy making process had been decentralised. It has been indicated that the Chinese political characteristics changed from those of 'strongman politics' to 'ordinary-man politics.'¹⁹⁹ Whilst the paramount leader still enjoyed the highest rank and held formal power as the General Secretary of the Party, he no longer held the same informal influence as Mao and Deng. Therefore, the foreign policies were not solely determined by the paramount leader himself, but were rather achieved through consensus at the top level (mainly consisting of the members of the Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC).²⁰⁰ Furthermore, a series of bureaucracies were established in accordance to the new political atmosphere, within which the rise of the leading small groups played a significant role in producing and coordinating foreign policy. As demonstrated in section 2.2.2, members of the CFAC come from diverse departments. Various origins of interests make the process of decision making more complicated, which is further difficult to determine the foreign policy by only a single person or only one interest group.

Second, following the reform and opening policy, economic development and modernisation has become the priority of the national strategy. As mentioned above, foreign policies were also expanded and combined with the diverse interests of various actors, such as the MOFCOM, the NDRC, the PBC, the SAFE, the PLA, local governments, and state-owned enterprises. In addition to the economic and security domains, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education also played an active role in China's engagement in the world, particularly in relations between the EU and China, and were principle actors in the events such as the Year of Chinese Culture, and the establishment of the Confucius Institutions. From the perspective of the institutions, it has become entirely normal that foreign policy making is no longer the exclusive domain of the paramount leaders or the MFA, but rather is a common agenda in which multiple actors can become, and indeed are, involved.

¹⁹⁹ Wang Cungang, "当今中国的外交政策:谁在制定?谁在影响?——基于国内行为体的视角 (Foreign policy in Contemporary China: who is making it? Who is influencing?—a perspective from the domestic actors)", 4.

²⁰⁰ Tang Tsou, "Chinese politics at the top: factionalism or informal politics? Balance-of-power politics or a game to win all?", *The China Journal* 34, (1995): 95-156; Bo Zhiyue, *China's elite politics: political transition and power balancing* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2007), 139-202.

2.4 Conclusion: The Implications for EU-China Relations

In the association to the demonstration of the EU's complex nature as an international actor, this chapter has shown that China is also complicated in the sense of the formation of its foreign policies. The reason for studying the nature of the actors is to avoid oversimplifying them as unitary entities. In fact, they have multiple levels to their decision-making processes, and at each level there are various actors who could wield diverse competences to achieve their respective goals. In the EU, there are organs such as the Council, the Commission and the Parliament who have certain powers to shape EU policies. Meanwhile, at the sub-level, member states are able to maintain a certain degree of sovereignty across a wide range of policies.

Whilst perhaps not having the same level of complexity as the EU, Chinese foreign policy making is nevertheless both complex and diverse. Crucially, far more being recognised by external observers who often still assume a single Chinese interest, this chapter has shown the plurality in China's foreign policy-making system, and demonstrated the fact that there are various actors and interests within the system.

As will be shown in chapter 5, the EU-China relationship is becoming more mature in the process of its development. One sign of this maturity is that cooperation has been achieved across multitudinous domains. From commerce to climate change, from tourism to agriculture, the EU and China are now connected by multiple ties at diverse levels. The more strongly they are connected, the more difficult it will be for their relationship to be broken off. Again, as will be demonstrated in chapter 5, when the two are in dispute over human rights, cooperation in trade might still support the pillar of their relationship at the same time. When they face commercial conflicts, the needs for cooperation in terms of long-vision strategy might function to repair the rift. To sum up, the EU and China have built a range of connections that cover high politics to low politics, and have established communications both at the top level and the subordinate levels. The relationship is complicated because it is built on two actors who are themselves highly complex in nature.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework: Constructivism and the Dominant Research Approaches Towards EU-China Relations

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to establish the theoretical framework for this thesis, and provide a clear basis for the discussion of identities in following chapters. This chapter aims to demonstrate the nature and claims of conventional theories in studies of EU-China relations, and further to show the value added by a constructivist approach. Specifically, this chapter will discuss how the conventional theories – namely realism, liberalism and the English School – have been applied in analysing EU-China relations. I will first expound the essential features of the conventional theories, and second will demonstrate their applications in studies of EU-China relations. Thirdly, whilst recognising the contribution of these dominant theories in addressing EU-China relations, I will also indicate their shortcomings in explaining the relationship. On that basis, I will then introduce the essence of constructivism, and then explain the benefits of applying a constructivist approach in studies of EU-China relations.

Studies of EU-China relations mainly focus on two levels, the first one being the EU and China in the context of the evolving structure of the international system. From this perspective, the EU and China have gone through bipolarity and unipolarity, and now live in a system that is debatably going to be multipolar. At this level, the research analyses how the EU and China are influenced by the transformation of the international system. For instance, scholars consider what the implications of the end of the Cold War were on EU-China relations;²⁰¹ and what does a rising China mean to the world and how should the EU deal with it?²⁰² Similarly, from

²⁰¹ Wu Baiyi, “后冷战国际体系变动与中欧关系 (The Post-Cold War System Change and the Sino-EU Relations)”, 1-16; Volker Stanzel, “The EU and China in the global system”, in *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects*, eds. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider and Zhou Hong (New York: Routledge, 2008), 251-269.

²⁰² Martin Jacques, “The Implications of the Rise of China”, in *The European Union and World Politics: consensus and division*, eds. Andrew Gamble and David Lane (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 79-94; Bates Gill, “China’s Evolving Approach to Multilateralism and Global Governance: Implications for the European Union”, in *The Role of the European Union in Asia: China and India as Strategic Partners*, eds. Bart Gaens, Juha Jokela and Eija Limnell (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 139-154.

China's perspective, some scholars are interested in how the EU could be a new pole to balance the power of the US.²⁰³

The second level focuses on EU-China relations at the bilateral level. Along with the deepening and broadening of the bilateral relationship, the studies on the EU and China have also expanded. The literature covers the various aspects of economies,²⁰⁴ environmental issues,²⁰⁵ energy issues,²⁰⁶ human rights,²⁰⁷ security,²⁰⁸ and so forth. It analyses the cooperation in, and challenges of, the bilateral relationship and discusses the various factors that have implications in this regard.

Realism and liberalism dominate the analytical approaches to EU-China relations. As mentioned above, neorealists study how the relationship develops in the international system, whilst neoliberal scholars study the interdependent status of the relationship. However, the two dominant approaches face a common problem: they take the international system and the actors' interests as given, and neglect the function of identities in the shaping of those actors' interests. The lack of awareness of the actors' identities is the critical factor that results in the misunderstanding of interests. Defining the interests of the actors from the perspective of the international system is somehow fragmentary; sometimes, as in the cases of the EU and China, it could even be misleading²⁰⁹.

²⁰³ Huo Zhengde, "论中欧战略关系 (EU-China strategic partnership)", *International Studies* 2, (2005): 1-5; Xu Kaiyi, "中外关系冷战后中欧关系发展的动力和基础 (The motivation and foundation of the development of EU-China relations in the Post-Cold War era)", *International Forum* 4, no.1 (2002): 32-37; Wu Baiyi, "后冷战国际体系变动与中欧关系 (The Post-Cold War System Change and the Sino-EU Relations)", 1-16.

²⁰⁴ Franco Algeri, "EU Economic Relations with China: An Institutional Perspective," *The China Quarterly* 169, (2002): 64-77; Carol M. Glen and Richard C. Murgu, "EU-China relations: balancing political challenges with economic opportunities", *Asia Europe Journal* 5, no. 3 (2007): 331-344.

²⁰⁵ David Scott, "Environmental issues as a 'strategic' key in EU-China relations", *Asia Europe Journal* 7, no. 2 (2009): 211-224.

²⁰⁶ Frank Umbach, "China's Energy and Raw Material Diplomacy and the Implications for the EU-China Relations", *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs-China* 36, no. 1 (2007): 39-56.

²⁰⁷ Shen Wenwen, "EU-China Relations on Human Rights in Competing Paradigms: Continuity and Change", in Thomas Christiansen, Emil Kirchner, and Philomena B. Murray (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of EU-Asia Relations* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 165-180.

²⁰⁸ May-Britt Stumbaum, "Opportunities and limits of EU-China security cooperation", *The International Spectator* 42, no. 3 (2007): 351-370.

²⁰⁹ For instance, during and after the Iraq Crisis in 2003, many Chinese scholars, along with Western scholars such as David Shambaugh, believed that China and the EU shared common interests in constraining US hegemonic power. However, this observation has been proved wrong in the case of the EU-China arms embargo negotiation. For detailed arguments, see section 4.3.4 in Chapter 4 and the case study in Chapter 5.

Therefore, this thesis aims to conduct an in-depth investigation of the EU's and China's identities. Constructivism argues that interests are not taken for granted, but shaped by perceptions. By applying the constructivist approach, I will explore the inner characteristics of the EU and China, and demonstrate the roles that are perceived and constructed in their interactions. In doing so, this thesis will give a comprehensive description of their identities, and consequently provide a thorough understanding of what their real interests are and how they are constructed. The first step, then, is to introduce the dominant theoretical approaches in EU-China relations in more detail, and give a detailed explanation of the benefits of a constructivist approach.

3.2 Main Theoretical Approaches

3.2.1 Realism

In its long period of development, realism has generated many approaches in international relations studies, but in this chapter we will only refer to those which are most often used to analyse EU-China relations, namely classical realism, neorealism and neo-classical realism. As other realist approaches are not part of the mainstream analysis of the relationship – offensive realism, hegemonic stability theory and so on – their (potential) salience will not be discussed in this chapter.

3.2.1.1 Classical Realism

Realism is based on the assumption that the international system is anarchic. Without a central authority to regulate the actors' behaviours in the system, states pursue their individual national interests for power and security. For this purpose, states choose power balancing as the main means by which to secure their interests. In light of this, realism does not seem to be an appropriate way in which to examine EU-China relations, because the EU and China are not engaged in geopolitical disputes, and are not conflicting with each other in terms of security.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ David Shambaugh, "China and Europe: the emerging axis", 246; Feng Zhongping, "Promoting Deeper Development of EU-China Relations", in *The International Politics of EU-China Relations*, eds. David Kerr and Zhou Fei (New York: Oxford University Press the British Academy, 2007), 267–80.

Thus, there are no mutual concerns about security at the bilateral level, and neither do they need to balance each other's 'hard' power.

Furthermore, if we take an overview of the assumptions of classic realism, we will be able to find some points to test whether classical realism is applicable in studies of EU-China relations. Based on Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, scholars have drawn four assumptions to establish the essences of classical realism.²¹¹ The first assumption is that states are the principle actors, where there are various definitions of 'state' in international politics.²¹² For realists, the essence is sovereignty, which consists of internal authority and external legitimacy. By this logic, a state is able to exercise absolute governance domestically and can behave independently on the international stage. From this perspective, as noted in the discussion in chapter 1, the EU cannot be regarded as an international relations actor. Even though the Lisbon Treaty expanded the EU's competences in many areas, member states still retain their sovereignty in certain areas, and the EU can only exercise its power in a unanimous manner, which means the EU does not have absolute governance over its member states. So, strictly speaking, the EU is different from conventional actors such as nation-states who have complete internal authority. Although the previous chapter argued that the EU has a legal personality and legal legitimacy in international society, to realists, it remains fundamentally a different type of actor from the states that are the building blocks of the realist approach. From a realist perspective, states join the EU merely because it suits them; the EU is considered an instrument which is 'significant only to the extent that they allow states to pursue their own interests' rather than having an interest akin to a state's in its own right. It is both a forum of interstate interaction and also a vehicle through which states articulate and promote their interests and power, rather than an actor itself.²¹³ Consequently, as one party of the bilateral relationship with China, the EU cannot be treated as a valid actor in classical realism.

The second and third assumptions can be combined. Classical realists believe that states are 'unitary' and 'rational' actors, and they act with one voice and prioritise national interests over other preferences. If we examine the EU from this perspective, it is not qualified to be an actor.

²¹¹ Karen A. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations* (New York: WW Norton & Company), 64.

²¹² General illustrations see Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez and Imad El-Anis, *An introduction to international relations theory: perspectives and themes* (Harlow: Longman), 59.

²¹³ Ibid. p.66.

Although the European Commission can conduct various actions within international affairs, the Council and the Parliament also have the legitimacy to represent the EU externally. As for ‘prioritised’ interests, and as once again shown in chapter 1, although the EU has progressively gained increasingly exclusive powers, its interests originate from multiple dimensions (including, but not limited to, the interests of individual nation states).

The fourth assumption is that as states focus on power, their cooperation is based on similar interests in terms of security. However, the current environment surrounding the international society has changed; even though security concerns remain important, they no longer are the sole priority of national strategies or, in a number of cases, even the most important one. More importantly, the EU and China do not have significant security tensions with each other, or more correctly, traditional security tensions. Hence, the security related assumption of realism has little to no relevance to the EU-China bilateral relationship.

There are certain arguments stating that the EU is trying to effectively influence China in order to prevent the damage likely to arise due to China’s dramatic rise within the international system.²¹⁴ There are also analyses debating the impacts of China’s rise and the EU’s response.²¹⁵ Rather than remaining confined to a relatively narrow perspective between the EU and China, the literature embeds their relationship within a global context which concerns world order and the international system, and this perspective leads us to the fields of neorealism.

3.2.1.2 Neorealism

Among neorealists, there are two main contributions that could be applied to studies of EU-China relations: Kenneth Waltz’s structural realism and Joseph Grieco’s contribution to relative and absolute gains. These two approaches have been widely applied in studying EU-

²¹⁴ Feng Zhongping, “如何推动中欧关系深入发展(Explaining the Sino-EU strategic partnership)”, *Foreign Affairs Review* 5, (2006): 17.

²¹⁵ Duncan Freeman, “China’s rise and the global economy: challenges for Europe”, in *Facing China’s rise: Guidelines for an EU strategy*, ed. Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2006), 15-26; John Fox and François Godement, *A power Audit of EU-China relations*, 32-37; Katinka Barysch, Charles Grant and Mark Leonard, *Embracing the dragon: The EU’s partnership with China* (London: Centre for European Reform, 2005), 21-30; Martin Jacques, “The implications of the rise of China”, 79-94.

China relations. Structural realism has been employed to explain the development of the EU-China relationship in the context of a post-bipolar world, whilst the perspective of relative and absolute gains has mainly been used to test the EU's and China's strategic partnership, as established in 2003.

Structural Realism

In structural realism, in contrast to the unit level (i.e., looking at the actions and interactions of the relevant actors) explanation of classical realism, Waltz argues that states are similar units in terms of pursuing their interests, there is no differentiation in function between different units.²¹⁶ As such, Waltz turns to a structured approach in which the structure of the international system is the core explanatory factor, which goes beyond the level of states and human nature.²¹⁷ The structure is determined by international anarchy and the distribution of states' capabilities. The structure creates a compass with states in it and constrains states' behaviour, and therefore determines the outcomes of international relations.²¹⁸

In studies of EU-China relations, neorealists focus on these two actors' positions and their influence in the 'multipolar world'. There remains, though, some degree of caution in referring to a 'multipolar' order as there is disagreement over whether this order is still in the process of emerging, or is already a concrete fact. Waltz argues that the international system is determined by numbers of great powers. Furthermore, the number and the definition of 'great powers' depends on the distribution of capabilities.²¹⁹ China is a rising power experiencing a dramatic economic expansion, and the EU is the largest economy in the world. Both actors have gained, and are gaining, further capabilities. These capabilities, as defined by Waltz, are the 'size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence'.²²⁰ But, he also points out, 'power is estimated by comparing the capabilities of a number of units. Although capabilities are attributes of units, the distribution of capabilities across units is not... [it] is a system-wide concept'.²²¹ Consequently, we cannot

²¹⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), 93-96.

²¹⁷ Karen A. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, 66.

²¹⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 88-101.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 98.

²²⁰ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The emerging structure of international politics", *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): 44-79.

²²¹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 88-101.

assert that the international system has changed because of the dramatic changes of the EU and China, even if there is a momentum of transition. Here we do not intend to dig too deep into the changing system, but instead focus on the writings that study EU-China relations via this approach.

Scholars tend to analyse China's and the EU's positions and influence in the context of a multipolar world. They place the EU-China relationship into a changing structure of international politics and explore the functions of the two actors within this system.²²² Furthermore, they also show a certain interest in placing EU-China relations into a broader context which involves the US. Chen Zhimin argued that the US is a crucial factor in shaping EU-China relations. The US's position, as the only world superpower, and its policies towards the EU and China are influential in the development of EU-China relations.²²³ On the other hand, EU-China relations are important to the US as well. For the US, the EU is its transatlantic partner and China is becoming its biggest competitor, if not a threat. Thus, the relationship between these two actors could have a significant impact on the US's position or even the distribution of capabilities, thereby leading to the transformation of the international structure. In comparison with the studies on the bilateral relationship between the EU and China in a multipolar system, we can find more research on the triangular relationship between the US, the EU and China.

Ever since David Shambaugh proposed the notion of an 'emerging axis' between the EU and China,²²⁴ numerous scholars have joined the discussion regarding the triangular relationship and examined the authenticity of this axis. Such work tends to assess the influence of China's rise on EU-China relations, and then discuss the rational pattern for transatlantic strategy, and finally make a summary of, or suggestions about this trilateral relationship. The way to analyse

²²² Gustaaf Geeraerts, "China, the EU, and the New Multipolarity", *European Review* 19, no. 1 (2011): 57-67; David Scott, "China-EU convergence 1957-2003: towards a 'strategic partnership'", *Asia Europe Journal* 5, no. 2 (2007): 217-233; Terry Narramore, "China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy", *The Pacific Review* 21, no. 1 (2008): 87-108; Zhang Tiejun, "Sino-European Relations: from the height to the width", in *The Role of the European Union in Asia: China and India as Strategic Partners*, eds. Bart Gaens, Juha Jokela and Eija Limnell (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 121-138.

²²³ Chen Zhimin, "新多极伙伴世界中的中欧关系 (China-EU relations in a new multi-polar and multi-partnership world)", *Chinese Journal of European Studies* 28, no.1 (2010): 1-16.

²²⁴ David Shambaugh, "China and Europe: the emerging axis", 243-248.

this relationship comprehensively is to build a triangular model and to explore the impact of the bilateral relationship (sub-level) on the trilateral relations.²²⁵

To sum up, we need to give credit to structural realism because this approach gives us a clear view of how the EU-China relationship has developed within, and been influenced by, the international system. It explains a potential motivation for the EU and China to come closer together in a post-bipolar system, and gives insights to the understanding EU-China relations beyond the bilateral (for instance, the triangular relationship with the US, or the multipolar system of international relations).

However, it has a number of imperfections and analytical gaps as it makes the assumption that the units in this system are similar. This unit-alike approach over-simplifies the complexities of the relationship. For example, the EU is a different international actor (unit) compared with the normal nation-state; as shown in chapters 1 and 2, its institutional function is different from China's centrally governed system. Furthermore, the EU's preferences in promoting European norms also differ from China's principle of preventing interventions from others and maintaining its sovereignty intact. Therefore, the assumption of the structural level does not perfectly fit with the detailed qualities of the EU-China relationship. In another sense, it ignores the subjectivities of actors, the concepts, values and norms of these two actors which can also have a significant impact on their relationship. We will explore this impact in more detail in the section devoted to constructivism below.

²²⁵ See for examples, Bates Gill and Melissa Murphy, *China-Europe Relations: Implications and Policy Responses for the United States*, (Washington: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2008), 1-49; Chen Zhimin. "中国、美国和欧洲：新三边关系中的合作与竞争 (China, the US and Europe: cooperation and competition in the new triangle relations)", *World Economics and Politics* 1, (2010): 5-22; David Shambaugh, "The New Strategic Triangle: U. S. and European Reactions to China's Rise", *Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2005): 5-25; Bates Gill, "The United States and the China - Europe Relations", in *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects*, eds. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider and Zhou Hong (New York: Routledge, 2008), 276; Shen, Dingli. "Why China sees the EU as a counterweight to America (Commentary by Franco Algieri)," *Europe's world: the only Europe-wide policy journal* 10 (2008): 48-53.

Relative Gains

The other group of neorealist scholarship focuses on the relative and absolute gains. Before Joseph Grieco joined the third debate between neorealism and neoliberalism, Waltz stated that cooperating states are more concerned about how benefits will be divided. States are more concerned with ‘who will gain more’ rather than ‘will both of us gain’, because one party worries that the other would use an asymmetric gain to take advantage of it.²²⁶ Grieco attributes this obstacle of cooperation to the anarchic nature of the international system in which ‘states fear for their survival as independent actors’.²²⁷ Inappropriate division of gains may create a relatively stronger competitor, or enemy, who could eventually threaten its independence in certain circumstances.

If we review EU-China relations, we can find similar fears, or at least concerns, on the EU’s side. Scholars have noticed the increasing deficit in bilateral trade and the increasing scale of foreign direct investment from China to the European states, and they started to examine how uneven gains will affect the strategic partnership.²²⁸ These studies show that although China is advocating a ‘win-win’ situation,²²⁹ the EU still believes that China is gaining relatively greater benefits, which would place the EU in a relatively weaker position in their bilateral relationship. Hence, the EU’s concerns about the relative gains have imposed negative impacts on the strategic relationship and resulted in several conflicts in the interactions between these two actors.

However, if we take a more comprehensive view of the relationship, we find that cooperation remains the overwhelming theme for the EU and China. The issue of relative gains, although it has drawn practical and academic attention, is not, after all, such an obstacle to the way of development. Both sides need to tackle it, certainly, but there is no evidence suggesting that cooperation will end due to this kind of issue. Therefore, the relative gain approach provides a

²²⁶ Karen A. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, 105.

²²⁷ Joseph M. Grieco, “Anarchy and the limits of cooperation: a realist critique of the newest liberal institutionalism”, *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 487.

²²⁸ Wang Gungwu, “The China effect in anxious Europe”, 335-340; Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse, “Goeconomic Relations Between the EU and China: The Lessons From the EU Weapon Embargo and From Galileo”, 40-65; Men Jing, “Challenges to the EU-China strategic partnership”, *EU-China Observer* 6, (2012): 4-9.

²²⁹ Wu Hailong, “China-EU business relations: working together to create a win-win situation”, *EU-China Observer* 6 (2012): 2-3.

valid perspective in certain areas, but it needs a broader perspective if this thesis is to make a more comprehensive study of EU-China relations.

3.2.1.3 Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism makes the attempt to bridge the gap between the structural level and unit level by adding domestic and individual factors into its analytic approach.²³⁰ Neoclassical realists acknowledge the importance of structural factors, but consider these factors to be ‘systemic incentives’, which are independent variables, and which can only influence foreign policy if they are translated through internal factors as defined as intervening variables.²³¹ ‘Different types of states possess different capacities to translate the various elements of national power into state power and foreign policy’.²³² In contrast to Waltz’s assumption, neoclassical realists argue that states are not similar units with similar functions.

This kind of approach somehow resolves the problems of structural realism as it highlights the different types of actors and the functions within it. It is particularly useful in the cases of understanding an actor such as the EU, which has a highly complicated inner institutional structure. Scholars examine how the external incentives can be transferred into the EU’s foreign policy through its policy-making process, and how the EU’s internal dynamics influence the formation of its external policies, such as its policies towards China.²³³ In a reverse way, scholars also analyse China’s domestic structure and demands, and how they can

²³⁰ Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, “Realism”, in *The Globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relations* eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 170.

²³¹ Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy”, *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 144-172.

²³² Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, “Realism”, 171.

²³³ Olaf Griesse, “EU-China relations—an assessment by the communications of the European Union”, *Asia Europe Journal* 4, no. 4 (2006): 545-553; May-Britt Stumbaum, “Engaging China—Uniting Europe? EU Foreign Policy towards China,” in *European foreign policy in an Evolving International System*, eds. Nicola Casarini and Costanza Musu (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). 57-75.; Chen Zhimin, “欧盟的有限战略行为主体特性与中欧战略伙伴关系—以解除对华军售禁令为例 (The Limits of EU as a Strategic Actor and EU-China Strategic Partnership: The Case of Ending EU's Arms Embargo on China),” *International Review* 5, (2006): 1-10; Franco Algeri, “It’s the system matters: institutionalization and making of EU policy toward China, in *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects*, eds. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, Zhou Hong (New York: Routledge, 2008), 65-83.

influence its foreign policies.²³⁴ Furthermore, research into the influences of mutual domestic motivations on the bilateral relationship can also be found in studies of EU-China relations²³⁵.

Neoclassical realism offers a subtler perspective from which to analyse EU-China relations, considering the EU's complicated institutions and China's obscure political regime.²³⁶ It is important to focus on both the unit level and the structural level. However, focusing purely on the domestic institution, leadership and the state-society relationship is not sufficient. The argument in this thesis is that there are cultural factors that are also important in the formation of foreign policy: identities, values, norms and principles can influence the states' preferences. Hence the need to adopt a constructivist, rather than neoclassical realist, approach to fully understand the nature of the relationship.

3.2.1.4 Summary

In the application of realist approaches, structural realism explains why the EU and China started to draw closer to each as the international system changed in the post-Cold War era. The idea of relative gains explains why disputes have increased in bilateral trade. However, realists might face the risks of underestimating – if not simplifying – the complexity of EU-China relations. Merely looking at the relationship from the perspective of the structure of the international system, but not clearly understanding the actors' perceptions of the international society, will lead the analyst to misleading conclusions. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, and as will be discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5, there are a good number of analyses of the EU-China strategic relations that have been shown to be defective, and some policies which are considered to have been incorrectly implemented. Therefore, examining the actors' perceptions of the world and each other is critically important to understanding of the genuine interests of the EU and China, and this is the exact domain where the constructivist approach excels.

²³⁴ Michael Dillon, "China's Rulers: The Fifth Generation Take Power (2012-2013)," in *China and the EU in Context: Insights for Business and Investors*, ed. Kerry Brown (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 142-177.

²³⁵ Ali M. El-Agraa, "The EU/China relationship: not seeing eye to eye?" *Asia Europe Journal* 5, no. 2 (2007): 193-215.

²³⁶ See the analysis in chapter 2.

3.2.2 English School

The crucial difference between the English School and realism is the former's core concept of 'international society'. As conceptualised by Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, the notion of international society implies that states are not only a series of calculative factors in a system, but can also conduct dialogue and consent to common rules and institutions, and maintain these arrangements by recognising their common interests.²³⁷ Following this logic, the English School has its particular interpretations of international society.

First, the English School believes that to a certain extent, order exists in an anarchic international society. Order does not simply result 'from power and the balance of power, but also from the acceptance of rules and institutional arrangements.'²³⁸ This does not imply that the material elements that are emphasised by realists are not valued by the English School, but that the latter is trying to find a middle way between the philosophies of Hobbes and Grotius. By fully taking into account the Grotian understanding of international law, the English School has a different understanding of rationalism compared to realists: in the English School, 'rationalism refers to the rules, laws, and institutional arrangements states have established to provide some degree of order to an anarchic international society'.²³⁹ As a result, the English School attributes a societal characteristic to the international system: although the system is anarchical, it is associated with an order which transforms it into an international society.

Second, by taking the Kantian idealist or revolutionist into account, the English School emphasises the importance of ethics and morality. Here, there is a debate within the English School about the 'thin morality' versus 'thick morality' between 'pluralists' and 'solidarists'. For pluralists, cooperation is based on a 'thin morality' that is accepted by states that share 'certain minimum purposes' or mutual interests and thereby establish a framework of international order;²⁴⁰ for solidarists, 'humanity is one'. International society is a certain kind

²³⁷ Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 1.

²³⁸ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, p.243.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), p.100.

of human community,²⁴¹ and as such it ‘has a relatively high degree of shared norms, rules, and institutions among states, which make it capable to enforce universalist ethics’.²⁴²

This debate is still constrained within the sphere of international society, which means states remain the major actors in this approach. However, along with the consequences of globalisation, the foundation of the pluralists’ assumption has been challenged. For instance, non-state actors have been attributed a place in global affairs and national boundaries have been increasingly blurred, which means the extent of ‘minimum purposes’ has been expanded to include not only the ‘recognition of sovereignty and the norm of non-intervention’²⁴³, but also human rights, international aids, arms control, climate change, and so forth.

Following these new conceptualisations, Barry Buzan rethought the English School. In his work *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation*, he conducted a conceptual transformation from international society to world society,²⁴⁴ which closes the gap between the ‘pluralist’ (self-interested states) and ‘solidarist’ (cosmopolitan world) debate. It provides a relatively comprehensive view to include both states and non-state actors, and contributes to a conceptualisation of globalisation in the English School.²⁴⁵

As a ‘*via media*’²⁴⁶ in international relations theory, the English School is extremely helpful in understanding the ethical issues associated with international relations, especially those of order, justice, sovereignty and human rights. Thus, it is particularly functional in studies of EU-China relations since these two actors have been involved in topics such as human rights, climate change, and humanitarian intervention. In almost 40 years of engagement between the EU and China, they have achieved mutually accepted norms to some extent, but in some realms,

²⁴¹ James Mayall, *World Politics: Progress and its Limits*, (Polity Press, 2000), 14.

²⁴² Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 2013), 250.

²⁴³ Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School*, (Hampshire: Springer), 100.

²⁴⁴ Although this idea had already existed as one of the three pillars in the English School, but it had been conceptually left unexplored

²⁴⁵ Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 161-204.

²⁴⁶ Barry Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR”. *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 3 (2001): 471-488.

they still do not share the same norms and values and this has become a relatively significant factor in delaying the progress of EU-China relations.²⁴⁷

The EU, as a normative power, has the willingness to promote its cosmopolitan values to others, especially in relation to China. Its early stage policy was considered to be a certain kind of ‘constructive engagement’, which tried to ‘help’ China with its domestic democratic change and social transformation. However, it turned out that there is a huge gap between the reality in present day China and the expectations of the EU.²⁴⁸ Consequently, scholars have begun to suspect the policies, and indicate that it is just this kind of policy that has resulted in a ‘strategic disconnect’ with China.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, scholars have started to focus on the moral and ethical divergences between the EU and China, and are attempting to find out why the EU’s normative policy did not work well in China.²⁵⁰

Among those normative disputes, the one about human rights has always been a complicated and controversial issue in EU-China relations. Scholars have examined this thorny problem from the perspective of norms and values that both sides hold.²⁵¹ They believe that the divergent norms on sovereignty and values on human rights are the main reasons why the EU and China keep debating this topic and cannot achieve an agreement to resolve it.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ Ayse Kaya, “The EU’s China problem: A battle over norms”, *International Politics* 51, no. 2 (2014): 214-233.

²⁴⁸ James Moran, “The EU and China: Growing Expectations, Growing Challenges”, *EU-China Observer* 2, (2009), 2-5.

²⁴⁹ Jonathan Holslag, “The Strategic Dissonance Between Europe and China”, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 3 (2010): 325-345.

²⁵⁰ Scott J. Vitell and Abhijit Patwardhan, “The role of moral intensity and moral philosophy in ethical decision making: a cross-cultural comparison of China and the European Union”, *Business Ethics: A European Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 196-209; Mikael Mattlin, “Dead on arrival: normative EU policy towards China”, *Asia Europe Journal* 10, no. 2-3 (2012): 181-198.

²⁵¹ Giuseppe Balducci, “Prospects and Challenges for the European Promotion of Human Rights in China”, *EU-China Observer* 1, (2009): 8-12; Philip Baker, “Human Rights, Europe and the People’s Republic of China”, *The China Quarterly* 169, (2002): 45-63; Georg Wiessala, “Duality-Dialogue-Discourse: some perspectives on human rights in EU-China relations”, *European Studies* 27 (2009): 83; Katrin Kinzelbach, “The EU, China and Human Rights: Normative Partnership or Antagonism in Disguise?” in *Prospects and challenges for EU-China relations in the 21st century: The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement*, eds. Men Jing and Giuseppe Balducci (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2010), 197-216.

²⁵² Men, Jing. “Between Human Rights and Sovereignty*—An Examination of EU–China Political Relations,” *European Law Journal* 17, no. 4 (2011): 534-550.

Climate change and global financial governance are also two areas where the English School approach has been applied.²⁵³ What we should be aware of is that the perspectives on these topics need to be differentiated. Some of these perspectives refer to institutions and mechanisms in cooperation dealing with issues such as climate change, but what the English School focuses on are the original drives to the cooperation, which are the shared norms and values that contribute to the collective actions that establish the ‘order’ of global governance.

The English School provides researchers a ‘middle’ way to study EU-China relations. It also offers more space and flexibility to analyse the motivation and the variable factors in the EU-China relationship. Its perspective on morality and ethics tallies with the identities of the EU and China: as a normative power, a part of the EU’s policies are norms-oriented, and its unique values partly contribute to its distinct characteristics and position in the world. China, as a rising power, is also careful about its moral reputation, and has expressed its willingness to build on common norms in international affairs such as climate change, financial governance and regional security cooperation. Therefore, there is evidence to support the argument of the English School, suggesting that other topics could be analysed from its perspective. In addition to the subjective elements provided by the English School, however, it is necessary to analyse EU-China relations from an inter-subjective perspective. In studying the bilateral relationship, it needs to explore the function of both sides’ ideas and perceptions and to understand how one actor’s ideas could affect the other’s. Hence a constructivist approach, which provides such an inter-subjective perspective, is needed.

3.2.3 Liberalism

In the case of EU-China relations, liberalism could be the main explanatory approach, since the EU and China have largely promoted this relationship on the basis of economic cooperation and global governance. Generally, liberalism believes that good human nature, democratic domestic regime, institutional construction or collective actions can moderate or eliminate war,

²⁵³ Jonathan Holslag, “China’s energy policy in the light of climate change, and options for cooperation with the EU”, DG Internal Politics of the Union, European Parliament, PE 393.501, 2007, Available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2007/393501/IPOL-JOIN_ET\(2007\)393501_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2007/393501/IPOL-JOIN_ET(2007)393501_EN.pdf) (accessed 25 June 2014); David Scott, “Environmental issues as a ‘strategic’ key in EU–China relations”, *Asia Europe Journal* 7, no. 2 (2009): 211-224; Jan Wouters, Tanguy de Wilde, Pierre Defraigne and Jean-Christophe Defraigne, eds., *China, the European Union and the Restructuring of Global Governance* (Glos: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2012); Ramon Pacheco Pardo, “EU–China relations in financial governance: cooperation, convergence or competition?”, *Asia Europe Journal* 12, no. 1-2 (2014): 63-77.

injustice, and inequality. This theory also covers the realm from pursuing peace to achieving cooperation. Of course, the issue of a war between the EU and China will not be discussed in this chapter, as this topic has not been analysed in this specific relationship from a liberal perspective. What really matters here is how liberalism explains the mechanisms in the bilateral cooperation and their impacts on EU-China relations. In this section, I will discuss classical liberalism, harmony of interests, liberal idealism, and neoliberal institutionalism to see how they have been applied in studies of EU-China relations. Generally, liberalism is functional in explaining how cooperation promotes EU-China relations. However, it has its limits in explaining the conflicts in terms of norms and other societal issues that appear in cooperation, and ultimately this is what constructivism is good at.

3.2.3.1 Classical Liberalism

To some extent, liberalism has been labelled as pluralist. In its view, states, non-states and transnational actors are all influential actors in world politics. But if we trace back to the traditions of liberal ontology, it is individuals who constitute the ‘most important unit of analyses’²⁵⁴ in liberal theories. Influenced by the thoughts rooted in the Age of Enlightenment, liberals advocate the liberty and rights of individuals, and in contrast they believe that state authority should be restrained as it is given by the people and the influence of the state should accordingly be minimal or limited.²⁵⁵

The argument posited by liberalism is based on the assumption that human nature is good and, most importantly, that individuals are rational and capable of calculating the costs and benefits of their behaviour and able to choose the best options for their actions. This might sound like the type of action motivated by self-interest, and its application could result in a Hobbesian ‘jungle’ scenario. But, because liberals assume that human nature is good, the collaboration between individuals can achieve an outcome that addresses the collective good.²⁵⁶ So,

²⁵⁴ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 121.

²⁵⁵ John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relations*, 186.

²⁵⁶ Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez and Imad El-Anis, *An introduction to international relations theory: perspectives and themes*, 27.

eventually, public opinion can positively impact governmental policies, which would clearly be a consensus that is beneficial for the public.²⁵⁷

Furthermore, liberals do not constrain themselves at the domestic level, but embed this point of view into the international scene. Influenced by Stoicism, liberals of the Enlightenment share a cosmopolitan perspective of the understandings of international relations. At the domestic level, especially in a democratic republic, individuals have successfully constructed a political regime of law, and a regulatory system to protect individuals' property and peace. At the international level, liberals also propose that this framework be embedded among states. In general, it is understood to be a 'domestic analogy'²⁵⁸ which grants states similar characteristics as individuals. Liberals 'see a further parallel between individuals and sovereign states', and logically deduce that the institutional organisation and rule of law can be applied in international relations.²⁵⁹ In this sphere, Kant was renowned for his 'perpetual peace'. Unlike the pure idealists, Kant did not deny the importance of states, nor did he merely focus on individuals; in contrast, by realising that states remained the main political entities in an international anarchy, he proposed a federation among states. Meanwhile, he also emphasised that this type of federation requires these states to be constitutional republics and democratic. This kind of thought complies with the argument that the public (individuals) make rational decisions and thus maintain a peaceful and harmonious federation.²⁶⁰

Kant proposed a solution for peace from a political perspective, whilst Richard Cobden contributed to the liberal school of thought from the economic perspective. As associated with the spirit of individualism and rationalism, Cobden argued that free trade is an effective means of keeping peace and bringing benefits to all participants. He explained his argument from three perspectives: first, from a mercantilist perspective, he saw free trade as an alternative to war in terms of pursuing commercial interests; second, from a rationalism perspective, free

²⁵⁷ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 122.

²⁵⁸ First used by Hedley Bull in "Society and Anarchy in International Relations", in H. Butterfield and M. Wight, (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London, 1966), p. 35. Then further explained by Hidemi Suganami, in *The Domestic Analogy and World Order Proposals* (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²⁵⁹ John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relations*, 187.

²⁶⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, trans. by M. Campbell Smith (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1917), 122.

trade and the profits gained from it could be terminated by war, and hence the fear of losing these profits constrains the state's intentions to engage in war; and third, from an individualism perspective, he believed that this has an incidental effect on free trade, 'contact and communication among people would expand', and would lead to more friendly relationships among people.²⁶¹ Furthermore, Cobden asserted that free trade 'brings mutual gains to all the players irrespective of their size or the nature of their economies' and denied that 'free trade among countries at different stages of development would lead to relations of dominance and subservience',²⁶² which would subsequently be disagreed with and argued against by the neorealists.

In terms of studies of EU-China relations, how do we evaluate classical liberalism, and how does it fit with this specific relationship? Centuries ago, the primary task for liberals was to establish theories that could avoid wars and achieve peace. In the contemporary era, although war and peace is not the first concern of the EU or China, the insights of individualism and free trade are still instructive to studies: promoting free trade is seen as a mean of encouraging China's integration into international society.²⁶³

However, we need to realise the particularity of EU-China relations and be aware of the fact that some of the classical liberal views do not fit the characteristics of this relationship. Kant's federation of states assumes that states need to be democratic republics, or at the very least they should be the same type of state. However, the EU is neither a nation state nor shares the same regime as China, so we need to undertake an in-depth study to its identity and to find out why cooperation and peace can be achieved. Furthermore, the asymmetries of different regimes can potentially hinder the achievement of free trade, and policies in pursuit of free trade did not bring peace and harmony, but war and conflict. In the history of the relationship between Europe and China, the Opium Wars evidenced the fact that free trade (or the means to achieve it) between two unequally developed countries did not bring peace, but only injustice and conflict. At present, the disputes over textiles also show that free trade cannot easily be carried

²⁶¹ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, p.123.

²⁶² John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relations*, p.190.

²⁶³ Nicola Casarini, "The economic dimension", in *The evolution of the EU-China relationship: from constructive engagement to strategic partnership* (Paris, France: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2006), 21-22.

out between two economies with different regimes. Therefore, in terms of analysing the specific relations between the EU and China, classical liberalism does not provide a helpful theoretical framework.

3.2.3.2 The Harmony of Interests and Liberal Idealism

The legacy of classical traditions inspired liberal theorists in later ages. Among those traditions, harmony of interests and liberal idealism are the most relevant approaches in studies of EU-China relations.

Harmony of Interests

Based on the assumption that individuals are rational actors, liberals assert that the harmony of interests among individuals can lead to a potential harmony of interests among states.²⁶⁴ As stated above, even if individuals are self-interested, they can achieve public good within a national/domestic sphere. With this logic, and another logic of ‘domestic analogy’, liberals deduce that by sharing similar characteristics with individuals, states are capable of achieving a harmony of interests in the international realm. This deduction can also be found in Cobden’s arguments above, the interest in gaining wealth and the rational decision to avoid war can be considered two pillars of the theory of ‘harmony of interests’. However, this idealist view is challenged by the experience of the First World War; although there were diverse explanations for the reasons behind the war, the fact is that, empirically, it buried the notion of ‘harmony of interests’. The highly connected economic ties seemed helpless to prevent the onset of war.

Liberal Idealism

The First World War did not only give liberals the opportunity to criticise realist notions such as ‘power’ and ‘the balance of power’, but also urged them to rethink and develop liberal thoughts. The broken ‘harmony of interests’ reminded liberals that more things are required to secure the peace. ‘Consciously devised machinery’²⁶⁵ was a crucial notion of liberal idealism in the aftermath of the First World War. The core idea was to create an international authority

²⁶⁴ ²⁶⁴ Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez and Imad El-Anis, *An introduction to international relations theory: perspectives and themes*, 27.

²⁶⁵ Evan Luard, *Basic texts in international relations: the evolution of ideas about international society* (Hampshire: Macmillan Academic and Professional LTD, 1992), 465.

to regulate the behaviour of states on the basis of international law and justice. This idea was advocated by Woodrow Wilson in his famous 'fourteen pointes' and fulfilled by the establishment of the League of Nations. The purpose was to construct 'collective security' through international organisations and instruments. To some extent, this idealistic approach reflected Kant's thoughts on the notion of federation of states, as he wrote in his second definitive article:

*Every state, for the sake of its own security, may - and ought to - demand that its neighbour should submit itself to conditions, similar to those of civil society where the right of every individual is guaranteed. This would give rise to a federation of nations.*²⁶⁶

However, liberal idealism was ended along with the collapse of the League of Nations and the catastrophe of the Second World War. In the review of this theoretical approach, scholars argued that despite the innovation of institutions, idealism inherited the beliefs of nineteenth-century liberalism, and formed their ideas on the basis of domestic analogy.²⁶⁷ Liberal idealists still believed that the way to constrain the use of force among individuals at the domestic level could be achieved at the international level by eliminating war among states.²⁶⁸ However, as EH Carr argued, nineteenth-century liberalism was already outdated by the onset of the twentieth century. The way to protect an individual's liberty and to secure societal peace was inadequate in the following century, let alone the way in which to achieve peace in the international arena.²⁶⁹ Another characteristic of liberal idealism is that it relies on rhetorical morality and the belief that human nature is inherently good.²⁷⁰ However, as Carr indicated, the states in the League of Nations were self-interested and had double standards regarding morality, so that they could ensure their victories were closer to their core interests than the obligation to defend justice.²⁷¹

²⁶⁶ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 129.

²⁶⁷ Hidemi Suganami, *The domestic analogy and world order proposals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 101.

²⁶⁸ Leonard Woolf, *The war for peace* (London: G. Routledge & sons, Limited, 1940), 57.

²⁶⁹ Edward Hallett Carr and C. A. W. Manning, "Conditions of peace," *International Affairs Review Supplement* 19, no. 8 (1942): 443-444.

²⁷⁰ Karen A. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, 61.

²⁷¹ Edward Hallett Carr, *The twenty years' crisis, 1919-1939: an introduction to the study of international relations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1942), 89-94.

3.2.3.3 Neoliberalism

In certain conditions, neoliberalism has been seen as the equal to neoliberal institutionalism, but before coming to neoliberal institutionalism, we need to briefly introduce several theories such as integration functionalism/neo-functionalism, transnationalism, the notions of interdependence and complex interdependence, since they all contributed, as intellectual precursors, to the establishment of neoliberal institutionalism.

Integration functionalism developed as a theory along with the economic rebuilding of Western Europe in the post-war era. Functionalism believes that as interactions among states increase, interstate cooperation becomes increasingly necessary. Such cooperation in one field could lead to cooperation in others, and this makes states more integrated in their involvement in cooperation.²⁷² Functionalism was supported by the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community and the development of the European Economic Community. Originally, functionalism mainly focused on low political areas such as science and the economy. Along with the expansion of European integration, Ernst Haas and his neo-functionalism included political issues and claimed that integration requires political elites to realise that collaboration is in their self-interest.²⁷³

Transnationalism provides a wider insight on actors and the paradigm in global interactions. Liberals noticed the increasing significance of non-governmental actors in international affairs, arguing that the interactions among individuals and organisations across national boundaries can also influence international relations. Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane defined transnational interactions as ‘the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a government or an intergovernmental organization’²⁷⁴. They singled out transnational interaction from the state-centric paradigm, in which governments are the paramount agencies in interstate politics. Alternatively, in transnational interactions, individuals and organisations can ‘play direct roles vis-à-vis foreign

²⁷² Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 126.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p.xii.

governments or foreign societies and thus by pass their own governments'.²⁷⁵ This new pattern of world politics, associated with the actors (governments, intergovernmental organisations, multinational enterprises, nongovernmental organisations, domestic organisations, individuals, etc.) within it, has created a world like a 'cobweb'²⁷⁶, and increased sensitivity among societies.²⁷⁷

Moreover, the idea that international organisations (IOs) and international nongovernmental organisations (INGOs) are significant actors in the international system entails that they be able to diffuse norms (e.g., human rights, development, democracy, gender equality, and so forth) in the international system.²⁷⁸ Given their active roles in the engagement with other states, the IOs and INGOs are good transmitters of norms, and also capable of teaching norms to other actors by socialising them.²⁷⁹ The process of socialisation would make the other actors accept and internalise these norms,²⁸⁰ and thereby change their behaviour and character.²⁸¹ Therefore, this is also considered a critical reason for the EU to engage with China, through which the EU hopes to integrate China into the international community and (initially at least) engender domestic liberal change within China.²⁸²

International transactions brought about the interconnectedness between states, yet Keohane and Nye thought it is not sufficient to generalise the characteristics of transnational interactions. Therefore, they introduced the notion of 'costly effects' to differentiate interdependence from interconnectedness. In the volume *Power and Interdependence*, they defined interdependence as 'situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different

²⁷⁵ Ibid., xiii.

²⁷⁶ John W. Burton, *World Society* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.43.

²⁷⁷ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Transnational Relations and World Politics*, p.xvi.

²⁷⁸ Martha Finnemore, and Kathryn Sikkink, "International norm dynamics and political change", *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 887-917; Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Norms, institutions, and national identity in contemporary Europe", *International Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (1999): 83-114.

²⁷⁹ Martha Finnemore, "International organizations as teachers of norms: the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and science policy", *International Organization* 47, no. 4 (1993): 597; Susan Park, "Theorizing norm diffusion within international organizations", *International politics* 43, no. 3 (2006): 342-361.

²⁸⁰ Andrew P. Cortell and James W. Davis Jr., "Understanding the domestic impact of international norms: A research agenda", *International Studies Review* 2, no. 1 (2000): 65-87.

²⁸¹ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 101.

²⁸² European Commission, A long term policy for China-Europe relations. COM (1995) 279 final.

countries'.²⁸³ There are two dimensions of interdependence in transactions: sensitivity and vulnerability. Sensitivity refers to the 'degrees of responsiveness' of an actor, meaning how fast and easy would it be to be affected by other actors' changes. Vulnerability involves the 'relative availability and costliness of the alternatives', which means how many options an actor has to cope with any changes and how much would it suffer for the costs.²⁸⁴

Complex interdependence is a core concept that presents an alternative type of world politics in contrast to that of realism. There are three assumptions of complex interdependence through which to challenge realism and construct a neoliberal scenario. The first assumption is that world politics is becoming increasingly pluralistic. There are 'multiple channels' (interstate, trans-governmental, transnational) within global interactions. Furthermore, the obscure distinctions between domestic and diplomatic issues, and the involvement of various domestic departments and international organisations are both reasons to describe world politics as pluralistic. The second assumption states that there is an 'absence of hierarchy among issues'. The third assumption says that, in conditions of complex interdependence, the importance of military force as a national tool among states has declined.²⁸⁵

Based on these intellectual precursors, neoliberal institutionalist scholars argue that international cooperation can be achieved by 'institutions', which are defined as 'persistent and connected sets of rules and practices that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations.'²⁸⁶ Neoliberal institutionalists do not agree with classical liberalism as to the roots of international cooperation, because they believe that cooperation comes from nations' self-interests rather than inherently good human nature. Another difference between classical liberalism and neoliberal institutionalism is that the latter, sharing the same assumption as neorealism, believes that states are key actors in world politics. Furthermore, neoliberal institutionalism shares another assumption with neorealism, namely that the international system is anarchic, but it challenges neorealism on the grounds that despite conditions of anarchy, cooperation can be achieved if states have mutual interests or reciprocity,

²⁸³ Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Longman, 2012), 8.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-29.

²⁸⁶ Peter M. Haas, Robert O. Keohane and Marc A. Levy, eds. *Institutions for the earth: sources of effective international environmental protection* (London: Mit Press, 1993), 4-5.

and the function of institutions is to govern the anarchic system and rationalize the behaviour of states. For neoliberalism, the priority of states is to collaborate to maximize their absolute gains through cooperation. States prioritise absolute gains over relative gains, which is a point of divergence between neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism.

Neoliberalism provides an insight to analyse cooperation in an anarchic world, but this theory itself also adds a further condition to cooperation as it recognises that cooperation can be achieved in areas where states share reciprocal interests.²⁸⁷ Where, then, do interests come from? How do actors recognise their own interests and mutual interests? In this thesis, I argue that interests arise from identities and can be perceived along with the realisation of identities. In terms of absolute gains and relative gains, neorealists see the rationality of relative gains in US-Soviet relations. In contrast, neoliberals see the rationality of absolute gains in US-Japan relations or in the integration of the EU. Therefore, various actors with distinct identities have different relations. Furthermore, as Keohane and Nye acknowledged, neoliberal institutionalism is an ideal type, which only applies for some countries and issues under quite specific conditions.²⁸⁸

3.2.3.4 Summary

In studies of EU-China relations, neoliberalist theory helps to explain the mechanism by which the cooperation between two actors can be established, and demonstrates how cooperation creates a form of interdependence between them. However, neoliberalism has neglected the function of ideas in cooperation, and thus is incapable of explaining the conflicts in EU-China relations. For example, in explaining the mechanism for cooperation, neoliberals believe that absolute gains is a significant factor in prompting cooperation, but I argue that it actually depends on what the actors believe. If they both believe in absolute gains, then collaboration is feasible, but if one chooses to prioritise relative gains over absolute gains, then there will be conflicts in cooperation. This is exemplified by the EU's attitude towards the trade deficits and concerns over China's investment in Africa.

²⁸⁷ John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalization of world politics: an introduction to international relations* 214.

²⁸⁸ Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 24.

Moreover, liberals (not only neoliberals) believe that, through collaboration between the EU and China, China could be socialised into the international community by the diffusion of norms. However, the reality of the situation does not fully comply with the theory. Despite the fact that China is socialised in some respects,²⁸⁹ it is still not as socialised as the EU expect in terms of respecting human rights, democracy, and so forth. It reminds us that when we examine the degree of socialisation, we cannot ignore a given actor's willingness to be socialised. The institutions of cooperation do not automatically teach the actor what to do. Norms need to be internalised through the willingness of the actor.²⁹⁰ The degree of willingness depends on the actor's perception of its identity within the international community as well as the actor's perception of the community itself, which determines the extent to which the actor accepts the norms of the community and the intentions they have with regards to joining it. Therefore, to study their identities and their roles in international society, it is necessary to apply the constructivist approach, which provides the perspective to study the actors' inner characteristics, and the way they perceive each other.

3.3. Constructivism

The above sections have considered the dominant theories, and their contributions and imperfections, in studies of EU-China relations. In this section, I will establish the theoretical framework of this thesis by introducing the basic assumptions and essentials of social constructivism. I will then explain the functions of type identity and role identity to indicate how they will be applied in the analytical structure of EU-China relations.

3.3.1 Essence of Social Constructivism

Constructivism is not considered a substantive IR theory, but rather a social theory with different theoretical approaches. In this thesis, I do not intend to follow post-modernism, nor do I want to draw this topic into a philosophical approach in which I would question the possibility of knowledge. Neither a discursive nor linguistic perspective will be discussed in

²⁸⁹ Li Xiaojun. "Social rewards and socialisation effects: an alternative explanation for the motivation behind China's participation in international institutions", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 3 (2010): 347-377.

²⁹⁰ Thomas Risse, "The socialization of international human rights norms into domestic practices: Introduction (with Kathryn Sikkink; 1999)." In *Domestic Politics and Norm Diffusion in International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2016), 127-159.

this section. In this thesis, I intend to examine EU-China relations from a social constructivist perspective. Social constructivism lies in the ‘middle ground’ between rationalism and reflectivism.²⁹¹ The ontology of social constructivism is ‘social’ and ‘constructionist’. It argues that states are related to each other through ideas, and ideas define who and what states are.²⁹² It also has an inter-subjective epistemology, meaning that a norm is not only claimed by one actor, but is also acknowledged by the others. In the combination of the ontology and epistemology, the main characteristics that differentiate constructivism from other conventional theories are two-fold. One is its emphasis on the functions of ideas, norms, institutions and identities, whilst the other is the interplay between agents and structures.

The emphasis on ideas follows the intellectual legacy of Max Weber. He argued that people ‘are cultural beings endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude toward the world and to lend it significance’²⁹³, meaning that human actions can be value-based. In contrast with rationalism’s claim that national action is a consequence of the rational calculation of costs and benefits, constructivists follow the logic of appropriateness. Constructivists believe that an actor’s actions depend on principles that are shared with others (norms, ideas or institutions), self-beliefs, constitutional or regulatory conventions, all of which can have significant impacts on national behaviour.²⁹⁴ This is similar to the claim made by the English School, and even that of neoliberalism, but neoliberals ultimately focus on material interests, whilst constructivists emphasise the social construction of the national actions, implying that states do what is appropriate to their identities and cultural context.²⁹⁵

Constructivism takes an inter-subjective view of international society. As Alexander Wendt argued, ‘anarchy is what states make of it’.²⁹⁶ In contrast to the mechanism of neorealism’s claim that structure has a decisive impact on agents, constructivists claim that agents and

²⁹¹ Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the middle ground: constructivism in world politics”, *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 319-363.

²⁹² Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 372.

²⁹³ Max Weber, *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Illinois: Free Press of Glengoe, 1949), 81.

²⁹⁴ Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez and Imad El-Anis, *An introduction to international relations theory: perspectives and themes*, 188.

²⁹⁵ The content regarding the cultural context will be discussed in section 5.2.2.1 in chapter 5.

²⁹⁶ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.

structures are mutually constructed. Structure provides an external environment for states to recognise identities and define/redefine interests, while states can also influence structure or even transform it. In this sense, international society does not pre-exist but is constructed, and the institutional rules of society are the outcomes of the socialisation of states. In the same sense, actors (both states and non-state actors) are not naturally born, but produced; and interests are not granted, but defined. This kind of intersubjective relationship does not merely exist between agents and structures, but also between agents themselves, because a comprehensive understanding of one's identity needs the functions of others. The comprehension of the two characteristics of the constructivist approach helps to understand the concept of identity discussed below.

Identity is a core concept of social constructivism. It is generated in the process of socialisation into international society. In this process, actors recognise their own qualities and perceive others' characteristics. In the interactions between them, actors can generate a particular role from which actors will gain an appropriate dimension through which to conduct their behaviours. Furthermore, the nature of the role is associated with social components such as ideas, norms or perceptions. In the process of socialisation, identity answers the question of 'who am I', and it will be the guideline by which to define interests (what do I want) and, thereby, direct actions (what should I do).²⁹⁷

Identity has two qualities: subjective and intersubjective, both of which contribute to the construction of identity.²⁹⁸ The subjective quality describes the part of self-understanding by which actors realise their corporate identities and type identities. The intersubjective quality describes the part of interaction, by which actors recognise each other's role identities and construct a collective identity under certain conditions. The international environment functions as the external factor on which to attach external social characteristics and qualities on identities.

²⁹⁷ The relations between identity, interest and behaviour will be discussed in section 5.2.2.2 in chapter 5.

²⁹⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 224.

Identity is also changeable along with the transformation of international society. It changes while the structure or the components (social relationships, rules, norms, institutions, and so on) within it change, thereby leading to a variation of interests.²⁹⁹ However, there is a difference between constructivism and neorealism. The former argues that the external transformation (changes of international structure) do not directly change the pattern of national behaviour; instead, this depends on how it changes the actors' identities.³⁰⁰ Moreover, as stated above, due to the intersubjectivity of international society, interactions between actors can also change the social qualities of the international structure.

The relationship between identity and interest is that interests need to be realised on the basis of identity construction, which implies that actors can only know what they want after realising who they are. While the importance of material interests is not neglected, they are ideal-oriented due to the subjectivity of constructivism. Material interests are not directly given by the international system, but rather need to be realised by actors. Besides, interests have different forms, as will be discussed in the next chapter, and the EU is, to some extent, a normative actor. Normative interest is considered an important form of interest in the EU's perception. So, interests will not only be material, but can also be ideal.

In this thesis, we focus mainly on type identity and role identity, which will be explained in detail in the following two chapters. To briefly introduced these concepts here, however, type identity is a self-understanding of actors' own characteristics. It helps to understand the cultural qualities and characteristics of actors, and moulds actors' roles, and designs their behavioural patterns. The following chapter will explore the four types of identities of the EU and China, and will demonstrate their qualities, their views of world politics, and how they make their policies. Chapter 5 will then explain that role identity is a property that is constructed through the interactions between actors. It reflects the theme of the environment they live in, and is shaped by actors' perceptions of each other. Chapter 5 will also explore the historical context and attempt to examine how their role identities have changed with the transformation of international society. In the process of dealing with others, actors will construct a

²⁹⁹ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 268.

³⁰⁰ Peter Katzenstein, eds., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 59.

corresponding identity to the others, as will the others. The interaction between the two can influence the micro-bilateral social structure, which is also associated with the macro-international structure and, together, they will in turn re-influence the construction of role identities.

In order to bridge the type identity and role identity together, we must recognise that there is also intersubjectivity between type identity and role identity. The former can influence the process of recognition of others' role identities. Since the inner quality is influential to the actors' perception, the later, in a reverse way, can also change the type identity by changing the inner qualities of actors. During the Cold War, the role identities between the US and Soviet Union changed at times due to relatively minor changes of type identities, and eventually a huge transformation of type identities occurred due to the influences of role identities. Therefore, we can assume that type identity is relatively stable and the process of transformation of type identity is relatively long. In contrast, role identity changes rapidly and reflects the short-term relationship between two actors. We will also test this assumption in the following chapters.

3.3.2 Saliency of a Constructivist Approach

On the basis of critiques of other theoretical approaches, this section explains the benefits of applying the constructivist approach. By supplying a subjective and intersubjective perspective, the constructivist approach should help to establish an understanding of the EU's and China's genuine characteristics and ideas.

First, this approach drives us to conduct an in-depth investigation of the EU's and China's ideas. For example, how do they recognise themselves, how do they perceive others, and what do they want to obtain from each other? Indeed, conventional theories can provide insights in understanding EU-China relations, and many of them have been successfully applied in the analysis of this relationship. For instance, they have demonstrated the EU's and China's grand strategies in global politics, and they have also explained the two actors' motivations and interactions in their cooperation. To some extent, their approaches are valid in the sense that

an actor's interest is given by the international system, and its behaviour is determined by the structure or the institution.

But beyond that, this thesis asks a simple but very important question: what do they genuinely want from each other? This question cannot be answered simply by discussing the structure of the international system or debating the cooperation institutions because this might underestimate the complexity of the EU and China. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, the EU and China are complicated actors with multifaceted inner actors and sophisticated policy-making processes, so it would be misleading to summarise their interests from one perspective. What do they want from each other actually asks what their interests in holding the relationship are, and in order to answer this question, the preceding task is to determine who they are. By examining their inner characteristics and perceptions of each other, a constructivist approach can help to explore what kind of roles they have in this relationship, and what they really want from each other.

Second, it provides a subtle view. Relationships are dynamic in the development of international relations, and if we take a structural realist view then the EU and China have only experienced one large structural shift since 1975. However, as will be illustrated in chapter 5, the EU-China relationship has experienced a number of dramatic changes over time. Therefore, instead of focusing on grand changes at the macro-level, a constructivist perspective can contribute by detecting detailed influences that are imposed by the transformation of the international system on individual actors. In a study of a bilateral relationship, such a perspective is helpful in taking a closer view of the actor themselves and their counterpart.

Third, it provides an alternative perspective from which to study EU-China relations. Conventional theories have dominated studies of EU-China relations, but the application of the constructivist approach in this realm is not that common, and this thesis intends to fill the associated lacuna by showing the utility of the constructivist approach in studies of EU-China relations.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter gave a thorough review of the dominant theoretical approaches in studies of EU-China relations. By demonstrating the nature and claims of realism, liberalism and the English School, this chapter recognised that these conventional theories do have value in address EU-China relations. Despite their contribution, this chapter indicated that, to some extent, they have imperfections in understand the specific relationship between the EU and China. On this basis, this chapter propounded the essence of constructivism, and introduced the value added by a constructivist approach in studying EU-China relations. In doing so, this chapter established the theoretical framework for the thesis, and provided the basis for the analysis of identities in following chapters.

To summarise, structural realism offers an insight in explaining the engagement of the EU and China under the transition of the international system in the post-Cold War era. The theory of relative gains also contributes by explaining the conflicts inherent to bilateral trade. However, because it emphasises the actor's material power, it is incapable of understanding the EU's nature as a valid actor in the international system. Furthermore, focusing merely on the international system results in the realists overlooking the actors' real interests. Because the actors are not the subordinate products of the international system, but are rather active participants who can also construct the system, their interests are not purely determined by the international system but also by their self-understandings and their perceptions of other actors. In light of this, defining the actors' interests from a neorealist perspective could result in misleading conclusions, and this is why it is important to take a constructivist approach to understand actors' perceptions and identities in international society.

Liberalism is functional in interpreting the mechanisms of cooperation between the EU and China. It also explains the EU's interests in promoting trade with China, which is not only aimed at absolute gains, but also the diffusion of norms associated with trade and other economic interactions. However, cooperation is not just based on material profits, but on the perceptions of them. Collaboration is not always successful if the conceptions are asymmetric. This chapter argues that if one side decides to evaluate the bilateral trade from the perspective of relative gains, then the cooperation will collapse into conflict. Or, if one side does not accept the norms and thus refuses to internalise them into its policies, then it would be difficult for the

socialisation to progress. Therefore, it is first necessary to explore the actors' inner characteristics and conceptions, which are determined by the qualities of their identities.

To some extent, the English School has provided an effective approach to understanding the perceptions and ideas of the EU and China. However, in addition to understanding their subjective conceptions, it is also necessary to study how conceptions influence each other, which is to analyse the intersubjective engagement between the actors. This will be discussed in terms of 'role identity' in chapter 5.

Constructivism is different from other theoretical approaches as it emphasises the ideas and intersubjectivity in international society. Identity is an intersubjective notion consisting of ideas, norms and perceptions. Specifically, ideas are the subjective products of the actor and norms are the common principles of the community that the actor participates in, while perceptions are the intersubjective concepts that are generated in the interactions between actors and the community, or even among the actors themselves. This chapter argued that identity answers the question 'who am I' in that only by realising the identity of itself will the actor be able to define its interests and shape its behaviour. I have briefly introduced the notion of type identity and role identity. Type identity will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, which will demonstrate the inner characteristics of the EU and China. Role identity will be thoroughly analysed in chapter 5, which will focus on their intersubjective interactions, and how their perceptions of each other can influence the relationship.

Whilst recognising the values of conventional theories in the study of EU-China relations, this chapter has highlighted the salience of the constructivist approach. Instead of saying what the EU and China will do in the international system (realism), or what they should do in an interdependent system (liberalism), this research focuses on what they *want* to do. By conducting an in-depth investigation of their identities, this research will explore the genuine interests of each actor and determine what drives them to behave in their particular manners the interactions between them. In doing so, it provides an alternative perspective to understanding the EU-China relationship.

Chapter 4. Type Identities of the EU and China: Four Categories

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 has established the theoretical structure, and explained the benefits of a constructivist approach for EU-China relations. Specifically, it introduced the notion of type identity and role identity, and showed how they would contribute to the analysis of the bilateral relationship and behaviours. This chapter aims to define the EU and China's type identities, and show how these identities contribute to an understanding of the actors' preferences and policies. It will first clarify the definition of type identity by demonstrating its key elements, which are the actor's inner characteristics, and the process through which to realise them. It will then illustrate the functions of type identity, which will contribute to our understanding of the formation of the actor's interest and perception. On the basis of the discussion about type identity, this chapter will explore the EU's and China's type identities from four perspectives, namely that political regime, strategy, value and economy.

Type identity refers to actors' intrinsic characteristics that are generated by self-understanding and inner-construction. The process of realising and identifying these characteristics makes the actor recognise what it is and how it is different from others, and these kinds of identities help us understand how their roles in the international society have been constructed, how their preferences have been defined, and how their policies have been formed and conducted accordingly.

One actor can have diverse type identities. In the cases of the EU and China, I will categorize these into four aspects:

from the perspective of political regime, China is a nation- state with its own democratic model, and the EU is a supranational organisation with a multilevel democracy;

from a strategic perspective, China is a rising power pursuing both pragmatic and normative interests, and the EU is a normative power, but with civilian needs and means;

from the perspective of values, China is an Eastern country with Westphalian norms, but the EU is a Western entity with post-modern characteristics;

from an economic perspective, China is a huge economy, but still a developing country that has a series of domestic problems, whilst the EU is a developed economy, which provides it with the ‘clout’ to spread its norms.

These asymmetrical type identities have constructed quite disparate patterns of behaviour between the two actors, and demonstrate quite clearly how the EU and China differ from each other in terms of international interventions, regional policies, policy making and human rights. This is the aim of this chapter and, based on this understanding, it will lead us to the next chapter, which will consider the role identities in the interaction between the EU and China, and their likely behaviours in this regard.

4.2. The Definition of Type Identity

Although I have introduced the notion of type identity whilst establishing the theoretical framework in chapter 3, it has not yet been explained in detail. Therefore, before proceeding to the four categories of the EU and China’s type identities, this section is designed to give a specific definition of type identity and show how it will be applied within the research into EU-China relations.

4.2.1 The Construction of Type Identity

In addition to the existence of an actor, it has cultural characteristics in the process of socialisation. These characteristics can be recognised by the actor itself and other actors in their interaction. At the level of civil society, type identity refers to ‘labels applied to persons who share ... some characteristic or characteristics’.³⁰¹ These labels of characteristics constitute the cultural content of the persons’ properties, and specifically develop the question of ‘who they are’ to ‘what sort of people they are’?³⁰² An analogy can be made in the domain of international relations. For instance, we can recognise a state by its name or flag, but if we want to understand what kind of country it is, we then must focus on its cultural labels and national characteristics:

³⁰¹ James Fearon. “*What is identity (As we now use the word)?*”, November 3, 1999, p. 17. Available online at <https://web.stanford.edu/group/fearon-research/cgi-bin/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/What-is-Identity-as-we-now-use-the-word-.pdf>. (accessed 9 November 2014).

³⁰² Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988), 2.

is it a Communist country or a Capitalist country? Is it an American state or an Arabic state? Is it a democratic regime or authoritarian?

These characteristics construct nations' type identities from two perspectives. On the one hand, states realise what sort of state they are, and which categories they belong to. On the other hand, through this affiliation with particular categories, states also realise how they are different from others. This is a mutual process: self-identification leads to group differentiation, and the quality of the group in turn helps states to strengthen their impression of the identification.

Then what kinds of characteristics can underlie type identities? Wendt argues that 'only those that have social content or meaning' can count as type identities,³⁰³ and that these 'social content or meaning' arise from 'membership rules'.³⁰⁴ Membership rules consist of labels that demonstrate actors' qualities, and accordingly generate certain kinds of behaviour that might be expected of them. For individuals, these labels could be ethnicity, sex, age group, or class; for states, they could be economy, political regime, political geography, strategic culture, and so forth.

What we should keep in mind is the ontology of constructivism. Membership rules are not predetermined, but rather inter-subjectively constructed during a long process of socialisation. In light of this, the content of the rules has a cultural dimension and historical context. For instance, in terms of cultural dimension, it is meaningless to describe both China and the US as countries with large territories unless we consider what societal implications of the large territories for the countries actually are. These include the governance modes that cover the whole land, the geopolitics for the defence strategies, the border policies, the strategies to exploit resources within these territories, and so forth. Similarly, it is meaningless to say that Mongolia is an inland country and Japan is an island nation unless we take the appropriate geopolitical strategies into account (the strategies in developing maritime forces). The point is that, type identities are composed by those characteristics that have social and cultural meanings.

³⁰³ Alexander Wendt. *Social Theory of International Politics*, 226.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

If we accept the idea that type identity involves membership rules, we are assuming that the actor is not isolated, but associated with others. However, in this situation, the function of ‘others’ is similar to a comparative example, which enables the actor to recognise itself and allocate itself into the correct category. In light of this, ‘others’ do not have a decisive influence on the constitution of type identity. In fact, ‘the characteristics that underlie type identities are at base intrinsic to actors’,³⁰⁵ they exist whether or not ‘others’ recognise them.

Since the construction of type identity is based on these intrinsic characteristics, then type identity is a certain kind of self-understanding that reflects these inner characteristics. It answers the question ‘what am I’ or ‘what sort of person I am’, and draws an image for the actor to present itself to the external world.

4.2.2 The function of type identity

Type identity represents the actor’s inner qualities, but these qualities do not directly answer the question as to why the actor takes certain kinds of actions. Then, how does type identity function as part of the explanation of the actor’s behaviour? Based on the understanding of its construction, we can assume that type identity has three functions. Firstly, type identity is associated with certain patterns of behaviour. Secondly, type identity helps to realise and define any genuine interests. Thirdly, type identity influences the actor’s perception towards others, thereby impacting on the construction of role identity.

In the sense of the first function, type identity functions as a link between international socialisation and behaviour. When an actor is associated with a particular social membership, its behaviour would be labelled with appropriate membership rules and it conforms to follow these rules to maintain its membership; in the other way round, it joins this category because

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

its actions are in accord with the associated rules. For instance, China joined the Communist bloc because the CPC took control of it.³⁰⁶

Some constructivist scholars call these membership rules ‘norms’, which ‘are collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity’.³⁰⁷ Following such norms is the means by which to maintain the validity of its identity, and accordingly it conforms with the inner qualities/characteristics to do so. The reasons for following such norms are various. Fearon listed several reasons, basically summarised as to establish and improve the communications and interactions within the category, to avoid sanctions or isolation, and a willingness or natural and historical inclination to follow norms.³⁰⁸ In short, it is in their own interests to socialize themselves into the category/membership.

The first function explains the actor’s behaviour at the level of social categorisation. However, within the category, various actors have diverse patterns of behaviour, and therefore functions at the level of actors need to be specified, which leads to the second function. Type identity answers ‘who am I’, and only on that basis can actors realise their interests. But it should be noted that interests are not generated from the answer to ‘who am I’, and neither are they directly connected with it, but rather need to be realised by the actors. Therefore, we argue that it is type identity that plays a crucial role in helping actors realise what they actually need, and what are the genuine interests that lie in their core identities and conform to their true characteristics.

From the perspective of social psychology, apart from the need to survive and other instinctual drives, individuals can realise other needs in the process of socialisation. Living within a society, individuals develop a personality structure of ‘ego’, which generates or modifies their personal needs in accord with their reality and social structure. This ‘ego’ helps individuals consciously recognise their position in society and make sense of their desires.

³⁰⁶ Based on the “Lean to One side” policy, China chose to join the communist bloc and stand on the rival side against the Capitalism bloc. More analysis, see Ding Ming, “Post-War International Relations and the Formation of the ‘Lean to One Side’ Policy”.

³⁰⁷ Peter Katzenstein, eds., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, 54.

³⁰⁸ James Fearon. “What is identity (As we now use the word)?”, 28-29.

It would be farfetched to equate national type identity with personal ego, but it does make sense to apply an analogy at the level of international society, since a state can have a collective identity within itself, thereby constructing an identity while participating in the process of socialisation. International actors can realise their distinctiveness from 'nationhood' and 'statehood',³⁰⁹ and, moreover, the inner characteristics can attach diverse values and preferences to actors, with these aspects constituting the contents of type identities. With these connotations of type identities, actors can realise and define their interests, and only by these connotations can their interests match their genuine needs and conform to their characteristics. This influences the realisation of interests, and together with the first function, shows how type identity affects actors' general behaviour.

The third function of type identity is that it impacts on the perceptions of others. Basically, type identity is intrinsic, and exogenous, to other actors. However, since it is constructed in the process of socialisation, its cultural and societal qualities make it impossible to be isolated from others, and enables it to exert an influence on interactions with others. In fact, during the construction process of type identity, it is associated with others, functioning as a comparative example for an actor to differentiate and categorize itself into a certain group. This kind of association does not only contribute to the construction of type identity, but also affects the actor in terms of how to think about others, because when the actor takes others as comparative examples, they already have some conceptual image of these others, and these images will be processed by attached subjective values and the consciousness of the actor. These subjective values and consciousness are based on the inner characteristics that the actor has, and accordingly conform to its type identity. For instance, after the government was established, one of the reasons that China leant towards the Soviet Union was because China itself was one of the Communist countries.

This third question is critically important as it contributes to understanding the linkages between type identity and role identity. Constructivists believe that the cognitions of actors are subjective. An actor with certain kinds of type identity will attach its subjective conscious to

³⁰⁹ Peter Katzenstein, eds., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, 59.

its cognitions, which affects its perceptions of others. It can construct an imaged role identity of these others, and this identity is supposed to have connections with its consciousness whose roots are in its type identity. But it would be wrong to blur the functions of type identity and role identity, as we still need to draw a clear line between these two kinds of identities; type identity still functions as a label to reflect the inner characteristics of the actor, and role identity remains its major functions in any interactions, though it should be noted that the former does influence the construction of the later.

4.2.3 The Application to the study of EU-China relations

This entire chapter will explain how to apply type identity to the analysis of EU-China relations, but this section is designed to answer the question as to why the four categories of political regimes, strategies, values and economies have been chosen. An international actor has diverse type identities, and EU-China relations cover various aspects of interactions. Thus these four categories have been chosen because they can help to sketch an outline of the two actors, and can reflect both the prospective essentials of cooperation and the possible problems that might originate from their type identities.

In the development of EU-China relations, they have had a ‘honeymoon’ period where both enjoyed the benefits from cooperation, but also suffered a time when their relationship was affected by tensions.³¹⁰ How, then, did this relationship develop in this manner? What are the intrinsic or internal factors that made it fluctuate in this manner? What are the drives to cooperation and what are the origins of conflicts?

These questions lead us to explore the inner characteristics of the EU and China. The reason I chose these four categories is that, on the one hand, we can discover certain shared characteristics that constitute the basics of their cooperation. On the other hand, we can uncover the differences in their qualities that can lead to debate or even conflict. These four terms cover the main aspects of the two actors’ characteristics, especially those that can significantly

³¹⁰ For instance, their relationship was in a harmonious atmosphere between 1993 and 2004, but had a crisis after the Tiananmen events in 1989. See further discussion in this regard in the following chapter.

influence the construction of their identities (not only type identities but also role identities, as argued above).

In terms of political regimes, the EU is a supranational polity with multilevel democracy. Despite the competitions and conflicts among its member states, the EU endeavours to construct coherent policies (as discussed in the first chapter). China, on the other hand, has a different political regime; it is a nation-state with a highly centralized system of government that claims to adhere to socialist principles, and holds different understandings of democracy and sovereignty from those that dominate in Europe. These kinds of different understandings fall in the category of values, where we still need to remain aware that these differences are related to the political regimes. But what they have in common is that both are accused of a lack of democracy (here, the EU as a whole), and they are building their democracy in their own ways.

In terms of strategies, the EU and China represent two emerging powers on the world stage. China is regarded as a rising power (or a risen power, as some might argue³¹¹). In spite of its 'hide brightness, nourish obscurity' policy (*tao guang yang hui* 韬光养晦),³¹² it actually never disguised its willingness to become a strong country. What worries the world is that what China has not revealed, and what it would be after successfully becoming a strong country. To fulfil the 'Chinese dream'³¹³, it pursues material interests to become a global power, and also tries to find a normative way to rise as a great power.

The EU is described as a normative power because of its efforts to promote the norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. However, this does not mean that material interests are not important for the EU, indeed, material interests used to form the basis of its

³¹¹ Nadège Rolland, *China's Eurasian Century? Political and Strategic Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative*. (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2017), 121-150.

³¹² Chen Dingding, and Wang Jianwei, "Lying low no more? China's new thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui strategy." *China: An International Journal* 9, no. 02 (2011): 195-216; Camilla TN. Sørensen, "The Significance of Xi Jinping's 'Chinese Dream' for Chinese Foreign Policy: From 'Tao Guang Yang Hui' to 'Fen Fa You Wei'." *Journal of China and International Relations* 3, no. 1 (2015): 53-73.

³¹³ Wang Zheng. "The Chinese dream: Concept and context." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 19, no. 1 (2014): 1-13.

integration, and always lie at the core of the EU's policies.³¹⁴ This has become increasingly important since the debt crisis of 2009. In the exploration of their type identity from a strategic perspective, we find that both the EU and China pursue material and normative interests, and this similarity naturally leads to both the cooperation, and the competition, between these two actors.

In terms of values, these contain a large variety of content, and the EU and China have various conflicting ideas in this area. This chapter mainly focus on the notions of sovereignty, democracy and human rights. As mentioned above, the EU is an integrated supranational entity, therefore its perspective of sovereignty has developed beyond Westphalian norms. China, however, is still exerting itself in order to defend its national sovereignty. Although China claims to have a democratic regime, the standards of its democracy certainly differs from that of the West. Furthermore, human rights is one of the hottest topics in EU-China bilateral dialogues, where the two sides often clash because their different understandings of human rights, which can be attributed to the two sides' historical cultural and contemporary developments.

In terms of economies, China has become the second largest in the world, but it would be an exaggeration to describe it as a great economic power as it still has many problems to cope with, and indeed its GDP per capita is still at the level of a developing country. The EU is the biggest economy in the world and consists of developed states, its economic strength enables it to promote normative policies.

Even though the type identity is relatively objective in the interactions between actors, it is conceived subjectively because it will be adapted by the subjective ideas of the actors so as to conform with their inner characteristics; therefore, role identity will be influenced by type identity, as will be analysed in the next chapter.

³¹⁴ Nathalie Tocci, ed., *Who is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor? The European Union and its Global Partners*, (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008), 23-25.

4.3. Four Categories

4.3.1 Political Regimes

Both the EU and China have distinct political regimes. The EU is a supranational polity with multilevel democracy, whose model of governance is novel but also immature. China, on the other hand, also claims to have a democratic regime with exceptional characteristics, and which is different from the concept of ‘Western democracy’. Studies of these two regimes are beneficial to the understand their processes of policy making, which consequently helps to uncover reasons behind these policies.

4.3.1.1 China: ‘Democracy’ with Chinese characteristics

China’s political regime has long been questioned, and is considered authoritarian³¹⁵. But officially, China’s Constitution stipulates that ‘China is a socialist state under the people’s democratic dictatorship ... [and] the state organs of the People’s Republic of China apply the principle of democratic centralism’³¹⁶. Therefore, although this might be contrary to Western scholars’ observations, China’s political regime holds ‘democracy’ as its principle, and it perceives itself as democratic.

To some extent, China’s understanding of the basic principle of democracy is not very much different from Western cognitions, but differs rather in how to *apply* democracy within the political regime. Unlike the widespread electoral democracy in the West, China has adopted the democratic centralism derived from Leninism, and is also associated with the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). This regime is also known as ‘one party rule’ or the ‘single party system’, which determines the transition and allocation of power in China’s political system. According to the Constitution, the single party system in China means that the CPC is the only legal ruling party, and thus does not share national administrative power with other parties, and does not allow for the existence of opposition parties. Multi-party cooperation

³¹⁵ Jie Lu and Tianjian Shi, “The battle of ideas and discourses before democratic transition: Different democratic conceptions in authoritarian China”, *International Political Science Review* 36, no. 1 (2015): 20-41; Melanie Manion, “Authoritarian parochialism: Local congressional representation in China”, *China Quarterly* 218 (2014): 311-338.; Steve Hess, *Authoritarian Landscapes: Popular Mobilization and the Institutional Sources of Resilience in Nondemocracies* (New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2013), 80.

³¹⁶ Article 1 and 3, *Constitutions of the People’s Republic of China*, available at <http://en.people.cn/constitution/constitution.html>, accessed 24 November 2014.

and political consultation are the only means by which other parties can participate in the political system.

In terms of the relationship between the party and the state organs, under the principle of democratic centralism, all the state organs must follow the leadership of the CPC³¹⁷, which implies that even at the same level (e.g., nation, local province government, etc.), the party institutions rank higher than the administrative institutions. In practice, the latter accepts the former's lead in three dimensions: political leadership, ideological leadership and organisational leadership. Political leadership means that the CPC sets up the core political principles and takes control of the significant policy making. Ideological leadership refers to the political and ideological construction, where party institutions are built at every level of state organs and are responsible for illustrating ideological directions to the executives. Organisational leadership relates to the composition of every organ: the CPC has the right to recommend the nominations of officials, and in practice the organisation department takes any responsibility for such work. These three means of leadership ensure that the CPC has supreme power over every realm of the state, thereby strengthening the leading position of the party in China's political system.

Although the CPC has the exclusive power in administration, there are still eight political parties who have also been empowered by the Constitution to participate in China's politics³¹⁸. Only by accepting the leadership of the CPC and not competing with them for political power can they be legally recognised and their participation realised. Multi-party cooperation operates in the institution of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) under the basic principle of 'lasting coexistence, mutual supervision, working together with open minds and sharing weal and woe'³¹⁹. The way multi-party cooperation functions is that the CPC allows the various parties to participate in the process of legislation, administration and judiciary: in the People's Congress, governments, courts and procuratorates at every level, it is

³¹⁷ Canchu Lin and Yueh-Ting Lee, "The Constitutive Rhetoric of Democratic Centralism: A thematic analysis of Mao's discourse on democracy", *Journal of Contemporary China* 22, no. 79 (2013): 148-165.

³¹⁸ The eight parties are respectively: Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, China Democratic League, China Democratic National Construction Association, China Association for Promoting Democracy, Chinese Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party, China Party for Public Interest, September 3rd Society and Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League.

³¹⁹ Charter of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, available at <http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2012/07/03/ARTI1341300912828101.shtml>, accessed 26 November 2014.

guaranteed that at least one leader is a representative from the other parties. Furthermore, through the platform of the CPPCC, other parties can also participate in the political system in an advisory and supervisory capacity.

But in practice, the CPPCC is not an organ of authority, but is basically an organisation for multiple parties to propose issues and consult political agendas, actually the final decision remains in the CPC's hand. Moreover, the CPPCC regime is not exceptional but, as mentioned above, all the national organs are under the leadership of the CPC, which refers to so-called 'one party rule'. What concerns China studies scholars is that this party-state regime has limited legitimacy and therefore political reform will inevitably be demanded.³²⁰ It is true that China is on the way to promoting democratic development, but what 'democracy' means for China, or more specifically for the CPC, is different from what the scholars think of, as Breslin argues, for the CPC, 'democratisation is seen as a means ... to re-establish the relationship between the people and the Party and to re-legitimise one-party rule'³²¹.

Indeed, no matter what policies the CPC might implement, they could not undermine the principle of one-party rule. But on the other hand, China has also made efforts to theorizing its democratic regime and enhancing its legitimacy. After the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the CPC has increasingly emphasised the concept of 'deliberative democracy' (*xie shang min zhu*, 协商民主), the socialist deliberative democracy, in the Party's dictionary, 'is the exceptional form and distinct advantage of China's socialism democratic politics'³²².

This definition of the deliberative democracy places this kind of democratic model in the Chinese national context, and attaches 'Chinese characteristics' to it, both politically and

³²⁰ Zheng Yongnian, *Will China Become Democratic? Elite, Class and Regime Transition* (Eastern Universities Press, 1998).; Thomas Heberer and Gunter Schubert, "Political Reform and Regime Legitimacy in Contemporary China", *Asien* 99, (2006), 9-28.

³²¹ Shaun Breslin, "Democratizing one-party rule in China," in *New Challenges to Democratization*, eds., Peter J. Burnell and Richard Youngs, (New York: Routledge, 2010): 136-154.

³²² "习近平：在庆祝中国人民政治协商会议成立 65 周年大会上的讲话 (Xi Jinping's speech on the conference for celebrating the 65th anniversary of the foundation of the CPPCC)", available at <http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2014/10/09/ARTI1412841028191314.shtml>, accessed 26 November 2014.

culturally. Politically, according to Chinese scholars' argument, deliberative democracy meets the need of securing social stability in China's process of industrialization, and can thus avoid the possibility of increasing the social conflict which comes with Western electoral democracy³²³. Therefore, this is more advanced than electoral democracy and more suitable for contemporary China³²⁴. Other arguments also indicate that deliberative democracy and electoral democracy are both equally important for democratic politics. The former exists in the CPPCC, whilst the latter exists in the People's Congress, and both modes contribute to ensure the leadership of the CPC³²⁵. Culturally, scholars argue that deliberative democracy is not novel for Chinese political culture, for it can be found in Confucian political philosophy, and as this model has been implemented during the long history of Chinese politics, it is consequently rooted in Chinese ancient political thoughts and fits with the current status of China's societal development³²⁶.

The label of 'Chinese characteristics' is an instrument to enhance the CPC's democratic accountability, and no matter what kind of democratic modes China applies, one of the most important purposes is to ensure that China is led by the CPC in a single party system. The assertion of Chinese characteristics, does not only differentiate China from the EU in terms of political principles, but also in terms of its practices. In the realm of the political regime, China's system of one-party rule does not need to face the same competition among multiple parties as the EU does. Besides, compared to a supranational polity that consists of diverse member states who have their own competences in a certain realm, China, as a nation-state can organize its national resources more efficiently.

³²³ Fang Ning, "Developing Democracy on the Basis of China's Reality", *Qiushi*, (2013) 2337-39.

³²⁴ Su Changhe. "Set Chinese coordinate for democratic politics", *Qiushi*, (2014) 11, available at http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2014-06/01/c_1110878767.htm, accessed 26 November 2014.

³²⁵ Yu, Keping. "Questions for the deliberative democracy with Chinese characteristics", *Study Times*, 23/12/2013, Vol.3, available at <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2013/1223/c40531-23922990.html>, accessed 26 November 2014.

³²⁶ He Baogang, "Deliberative Culture and Politics: The Persistence of Authoritarian Deliberation in China", *Political Theory* 42 (2014), 58-81; Tan Sor-hoon. "Early Confucian Concept of Yi (议) and Deliberative Democracy", *Political Theory* 42 (2014), 82-105.

4.3.1.2 The EU: a Supranational Polity with Multilevel Democracy

The EU is a supranational polity consisting of democratic member states. However, the EU's own democratic legitimacy has long been questioned³²⁷, and the issue of 'democratic deficit' has generated a great deal of discussion.³²⁸ In general, the democratic deficit refers to 'the idea that the transfer of policy-making power from the national level to the EU has not been accompanied by sufficient democratic control at the European level'³²⁹. This can be attributed to the EU's particular political regime and its institutions of policy making. I have already discussed the complexities of the institutions and the competitions among member states in chapter 1; in this section, I will focus on the EU institutional framework and will invoke the democratic legitimacy debate along with it.

How democratic legitimacy can be defined is the core topic of these debates. Scharpf's concepts of 'input-oriented' legitimacy and 'output-oriented' legitimacy provides crucial concepts to understand the debate on the 'democratic deficit'³³⁰. Input legitimacy focuses on citizen's participation and the process of their involvement. The legitimacy of the authority is based on the principle that it is built 'by the people', the criterion is that the people who are governed have sufficiently participated in the process of decision making and their preferences could have a direct impact on any decision. Output legitimacy, on the other hand, refers to effective performance of the authority's policies, and it focuses on the outcomes of decisions, and examines whether they can satisfy the people's will and meet their needs, which means the legitimacy of the authority is based on the principle of 'for the people'. Schmidt has also added the notion of 'throughput', where throughput legitimacy focuses on the political procedures between the citizens and decisions and refers to the 'internal processes and practices of EU governance ... and the EU's interest consultation with the people'³³¹. This emphasis on a

³²⁷ Giandomenico Majone, "Europe's 'democratic deficit': The question of standards." *European law journal* 4, no. 1 (1998): 5-28; Kevin Featherstone, "Jean Monnet and the 'democratic deficit' in the European Union." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 32, no. 2 (1994): 149-170.

³²⁸ Brigitte Boyce, "The democratic deficit in the European Community." *Parliamentary Affairs* 46, no. 4 (1993): 458-478; Andreas Follesdal and Simon Hix, "Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44, no. 3 (2006): 533-562.

³²⁹ Stijn Smismans, "Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union", in *European Union Politics*, eds., Michelle Cini and Nieves Perez-Solorzano Borraran (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 342.

³³⁰ Fritz Scharpf, *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 7-13;

³³¹ Vivien Schmidt, "Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output and Throughput", *Political Studies* 61, no. 1 (2013): 2-22.

‘middle area’ offers wider perspectives of the institutional framework among the Council, the Commission and the Parliament, and also enhances the importance of the EU’s governance, transparency and the involvement of civil society.

Following the historical review of the evolution of the democratic legitimacy, we find how the EU has strived to improve its institutional framework. In the earlier phase of European Community, its legitimacy was labelled as being ‘permissive consensus’³³², indicating that the Community’s policies were elite-oriented. Although the process of integration and decision making has gained the support of the people, the majority of them did not actually participate in, or care about, it³³³. Therefore, the regime was governed by the representatives of national governments and experts in the European institutions, it was designed to meet both national and Community needs, yet reflected little in the way of public interest. Consequently, we can assume that the Community has gained legitimacy on the basis of its policy outcomes, namely that of output-oriented legitimacy, but it is hardly convincing that the Community had complete democratic legitimacy if it failed to achieve input-oriented legitimacy.

What was then the strategy for the EU to enhance its legitimacy, especially its input legitimacy? The key answer resides in the function of the parliamentary institutions, both at the European and national levels, because representation in parliament is the bridge that links the public and the government, and parliamentary control over the executive is the people’s instrument to wield their influence on institutional procedures. In order to tackle the issue of a ‘democratic deficit’, the Maastricht Treaty of the European Union has empowered the European Parliament by granting it a more active role in the Community in several ways. The introduction of the co-decision procedure has given the Parliament legislative power³³⁴; the Maastricht Treaty, in 1992, also gave the Parliament the right to be informed by, and give assent to, the Council and the Commission³³⁵. It also introduced a provision that the nomination of members of the Commission needed the ‘approval’ of the Parliament³³⁶, which makes the Parliament

³³² Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold, *Europe’s would-be polity: patterns of change in the European community* (Prentice-Hall, 1970), 22.

³³³ European Commission, “Eurobarometer: Public Opinion in the European Union”, No.40, December 1993, available online at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb40/eb40_en.pdf, accessed 15 November 2014.

³³⁴ Article 189c, TEFU.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid. Article 158.

accountable in terms of wielding its power to determine the composition of the executive institution.

The Lisbon Treaty confirmed the democratic principles of the EU by declaring that ‘the functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy’³³⁷, and after its entry into force the power of the Parliament was further strengthened³³⁸, which theoretically enhanced the democratic legitimacy of the EU. Although the Parliament, as a citizen-elected institution, has gained greater authority in the EU’s decision-making procedures, participation in parliamentary elections itself at the European level, however, has experienced a declining trend; the turnout percentage at the European Parliament election has dropped from around 62% in 1979 to 43% in 2009³³⁹. The level of citizen participation in European elections has become increasingly low, which also implies that the input democratic legitimacy of the EU is still under challenge.

Some scholars tend to believe that the multilevel structure of European politics is the main reason why the citizens consider the European elections as being ‘second-order’ when compared with domestic elections.³⁴⁰ The initiatives of the elected parties lie in the domestic area, and the constituencies also see this as less important than the national elections, and therefore prefer to pay greater attention to the national elections, which can directly affect their domestic lives. To reduce the gap between the European and national levels, the EU declared its willingness to increase the involvement of the national parliaments at the European level by establishing more communications and adding parliamentary control over the national governments’ behaviour in the EU³⁴¹. Other scholars argue that the deficit of legitimacy at the EU level can be attributed to the lack of a common identity of European citizens³⁴². It is difficult

³³⁷ Ibid. Article 10(1).

³³⁸ This content has been discussed in the first Chapter, see section 1.3.1 of Chapter 1.

³³⁹ Data available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/000cdcd9d4/Turnout-\(1979-2009\).html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/000cdcd9d4/Turnout-(1979-2009).html), accessed 17 November 2014.

³⁴⁰ Hix Simon and Michael Marsh, “Second-order effects plus pan-European political swings: An analysis of European Parliament elections across time”, *Electoral Studies* 30, no. 1 (2011): 4-15; Reif Karlheinz and Hermann Schmitt, “Nice second-order national elections: a conceptual framework for the analysis of European election results”, *European Journal of Political Research* 8, no. 1 (1980): 3-44; Fritz Scharpf, “Legitimacy in the multilevel European polity”, *European Political Science Review* 1, no. 2 (2009): 173-204.

³⁴¹ Protocol (No.1), On the role of the national parliament in the European Union, TEFU.

³⁴² Franz Mayer and Jan Palmowski, “European identities and the EU - The ties that bind the peoples of Europe”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 3 (2004): 573-598; Peter Burgess, “What’s so European

to combine diverse national identities into a common identity at the European level, and it is even harder to construct a collective interest which conforms to everyone's interest. The EU has realised this shortcoming, and tried to improve its interactions with EU citizens. In the Maastricht Treaty, it adopted three means to interact with citizens: a Committee of Inquiry, petitions from citizens, and the appointment of an Ombudsman³⁴³. The Lisbon Treaty also reiterated the principles of giving citizens regular and direct involvement with the EU³⁴⁴. The initiatives of the citizens have now been gaining increasing influence at the EU level.

4.3.1.3 Summary

This section has demonstrated the EU and China's characteristics as political regimes, and it has shown that both the EU and China have some kind of 'democratic deficit'. But talking about democracy has different implications for each of these entities. For China, it is true that it has a distinct political regime that differs from the Western model, but what is more important here is that China believes that this is the right, or necessary form of governance, and it is legitimate and democratic in its particular context. It is this perception of its own political regime, in combination with its culture (which will be illustrated later in section 4.3.3.1) that makes China persist in this form of regime, and resist any intervention from the West, including from the EU.

In terms of the EU, through exploring political regimes, this section has illustrated the complicated sources of initiatives and the complexity of its decision-making procedures. In examining the type identity of the EU, it must be realised that within it, the EU has composite identities, and therefore it has multilevel governances. When we analyse its policies, it is crucial to realise the EU's complex initiatives and sophisticated decision-making procedures, as they can determine the formation of the EU's final decision on certain issues, which in this thesis, refer to the arms embargo issue. The EU's complex nature created a difficult situation in which China was unable to achieve its goals by simply convincing one member state or two. This will be further discussed in chapter 6.

about the European Union? Legitimacy between Institution and Identity", *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 4 (2002): 467-481.

³⁴³ Article 138, TEFU.

³⁴⁴ Article 11, The Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community.

4.3.2 Strategies

In the reviewing of the past time, we can see China and Europe have had a long history of communication and encounters, and when we consider the contemporary relationship between these two actors, we still find that the theme has not dramatically changed, as cooperation and clashes remain in this bilateral relationship. For instance, on the one hand, the Silk Road had created the connection between the two sides of the Eurasian continent, and nowadays, China's 'Belt and Road' policy³⁴⁵ aims to re-build an even larger commercial network to connect the countries across Asia and Europe. On the other hand, in the 19th century, the European powers had partly colonized China, forcing it to open itself in both political and commercial sense and brought a century of humiliation to China, whilst in the 21st century, China's rise has raised concerns of the West, with some media sources even claiming that China is becoming a new colonist.³⁴⁶ History has left numerous legacies for Europe and China to build a strategic partnership, but what is important is what their strategies are based on their identities and what impacts these might bring to the bilateral relationship. In this section, we will attempt to answer this question by exploring the two actors' strategies and their related type identities.

4.3.2.1 China: a Rising Power?

China is increasingly considered as a rising power, but what does being a 'rising power' mean? Some scholars believe that China will be a challenger to the current global order, and clashes with the contemporary great power—specifically the US—is inevitable³⁴⁷. Others argue that despite its increasing economic strength, China remains a status-quo power because of the increased benefits it received from the trend of globalization³⁴⁸. Between these two streams of

³⁴⁵ This policy was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping at Nazarbayev University at 7th September 2013, see http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-09/07/c_117272280.htm, accessed 1 December 2014.

³⁴⁶ For instance: Kathleen Caulderwood, "China Is Africa's New Colonial Overlord, Says Famed Primate Researcher Jane Goodall", 18 February 2014, available at <http://www.ibtimes.com/china-africas-new-colonial-overlord-says-famed-primate-researcher-jane-goodall-1556312>, (accessed 1 December 2014). Damian Grammaticas, "Chinese colonialism?", *BBC News*, 19 July 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18901656>, accessed 1 December 2014.

³⁴⁷ Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro, *The coming conflict with China* (Vintage, 1998); John Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014); see also John Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 4 (2010): 381-396; Edward Timperlake and William Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising: Communist China's Military Threat to America*, (New York: Regnery Publishing, 1999).

³⁴⁸ Guo Shuyong, "The relations between China's rise and world order", *Pacific Journal* 6, (2005): 5-13.

argument, some scholars take a relatively objective and modest position, describing China as a ‘dissatisfied responsible great power’³⁴⁹ or ‘a reform-minded status quo power’³⁵⁰.

This section argues that China’s identity as a rising power involves two aspects: on the one hand, China is aiming to shape the global order into a fashion that is beneficial to itself, while in the meantime pursuing realistic interests as it sees fit by which China can gain material powers and build its muscles for its development; on the other hand, China does not intend to bring a revolutionary change to the global order, but seeks an innovative way to rise, through which it can spread its normative influences and construct a peaceful environment for its rise. This character of China has constituted a large part of China’s motivation in its campaign to lift the EU’s arms embargo. On the one hand, China expected that the EU would work with China as strategic partners and promote the multi-polarisation of the international system. On the other hand, and at a very least, lifting the embargo would show that China has respected international norms and would generate a more normative image of China. The connection between China’s strategic character and arms embargo issue will be further discussed in chapter 6.

In the last few decades, China’s foreign policies has mainly been based on two principles set by Deng Xiaoping: reform and open (*gai ge kai fang* 改革开放), and ‘hide brightness, nourish obscurity’ (*tao guang yang hui* 韬光养晦). The former policy enabled China to connect itself with the world, and benefit enormously from globalization, whilst the latter had drawn many suspicions on China’s genuine intension in dealing with the world order. In this regard, some Western observers believe that it is a deceptive slogan which hides its true ambitions.³⁵¹ Meanwhile, Chinese observers also advocate its replacement by the principle of ‘active conduct’ (*you suo zuo wei* 有所作为, or *fen fa you wei* 奋发有为, as updated), as China has gained a

³⁴⁹ Shaun Breslin, “China’s Emerging Global Role: Dissatisfied Responsible Great Power”, *Politics* 30, no. 1, suppl (2010): 52-62.

³⁵⁰ Xiao Ren, “A reform-minded status quo power? China, the G20, and changes in the international monetary system”, Indiana University Research Center for Chinese Politics and Business working paper, 2012, available at <http://www.indiana.edu/~rccpb/pdf/Ren%2025%20G20%20DRAFT.pdf>, accessed 3 December 2014, cited with permission.

³⁵¹ Susan Shirk, *China: fragile superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 105.

large degree of power³⁵². In fact, both ‘hide brightness, nourish obscurity’ and ‘active conduct’ have made logical sense in China’s development process. At the beginning of the 1990s, China was facing an unpredictable international environment, and its own capacity was limited in terms of supporting high-profile behaviours.³⁵³ During that period, the logic of the ‘hide brightness, nourish obscurity’ principle was to focus on pursuing economic interests at home for the foreseeable future. ‘Active conduct’ focuses on pursuing political support³⁵⁴ in what is increasingly being called in China ‘a new era’.

Therefore, as China’s power, especially its economic power, increased, it has been more actively involved in international affairs. This kind of proactiveness arises not only from its own demand, but is also needed by globalisation, as China has increasingly become an important actor in globalisation itself.³⁵⁵ And in practice, when the time came, China did not hesitate to seize the opportunity to realise its strategies. In 2003, China took the chance to go against the US’s unilateral movements in Afghanistan, and tried to ally the EU and its member states to oppose US’s unilateralism, a strategy that gained China credit in promoting a multipolar world. Indeed, at that time, China almost succeeded in its negotiations with the EU to lift the arms embargo, and their mutual relationship was closer than ever before. However, the momentum did not last long as the lifting of the embargo was postponed and the clashes over bilateral trade increased. Eventually, the EU did not actually oppose the US in the manner China had hoped indeed, nor did the EU come to adopt China’s stance. This situation was attributed to China’s misunderstanding of the EU’s identity, and indeed China’s own identity in international society. The EU’s identity relates to role identity, as will be discussed in the next chapter; here, however, what China’s own identity is in terms of its strategy and the world order in which it lives will be explored.

³⁵² Wang Jisi, “The International Positioning of China and the Strategic Principle of “Keeping a low profile while getting something accomplished””, *International Studies* 2, (2011): 4-9; And actually China has already updated its principle and emphasizes on ‘active conduct’, which was confirmed by President Xi at the conference for regional diplomacy, see the report at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-10/25/c_117878944.htm, accessed 4 December 2014.

³⁵³ Shaun Breslin, “China and the Global Order: Signaling Threat or Friendship?”, *International Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2013): 615-634.

³⁵⁴ Xuetong Yan, “From hiding brightness, nourishing obscurity to active conducting”, *Quarterly Journal of International Politics* 4, (2014): 4-38.

³⁵⁵ Wang Guangwu and Zheng Yongnian, “Introduction”, in *China and the new international order*, eds., Wang Guangwu and Zheng Yongnian (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 10-11.

It is difficult to predict the future role of China in the ongoing transformation of the international order. Will it be an active power that conforms to the global order and accepts its responsibility to help maintain it, or an alternative power that articulates the difference and seeks to make reforms? China gained considerably from globalization, but it seems the more China has gained, the more suspicion has been placed on it, with one argument claiming that China will try to alter this kind of institution into another kind that more accurately reflects its own interests³⁵⁶. Another claims that China lacks responsibility, and is merely a ‘free rider’³⁵⁷ that only seeks, and acts, in its own self-interest. However, it should be realised that ‘being responsible’ does not contradict ‘pursuing interests’, as the former does not necessarily mean that an actor should sacrifice its own interests to build common ones. From a liberal perspective, taking responsibility to create a multilateral institution is also beneficial for the actor itself in enriching its own interests. In this regard, China has created, or participated, in various international organisations and cooperation, in which it aims to build its multilateral network to enlarge its own scope of interests.

China has benefited from participation in major organisations of global governance, such as the UN, WTO, IMF and the World Bank, and therefore there is no reason for China to even attempt any revolutionary change in these organisations, let alone have the capability to do so. Meanwhile, however, China has established innovative cooperation in other areas where it can make greater achievements. For instance, South-South cooperation and cooperation among the BRICS reveal China’s strategies towards developing countries and emerging powers. This kind of cooperation not only strengthens the economic ties among these countries, but also constructs a stronger group of power in its bargaining and negotiations with the Western, developed countries. China articulates the fact that the South-South cooperation does not mean the end or diminishing of North-South cooperation, and it also includes developed countries

³⁵⁶ Miles Kahler, “Rising powers and global governance: negotiating change in a resilient status quo”, *International Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2013): 711-729; Alastair Iain Johnston, “Is China a Status Quo Power?”, *International Security* 27, no. 4 (2003): 5-56; Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the challenge: China's grand strategy and international security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

³⁵⁷ See the video at <http://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000003047788/china-as-a-free-rider.html>, accessed 4 December 2014.

and international organisations within the framework of ‘triangular cooperation’³⁵⁸. In spite of this, China has nonetheless played a leading, or at least a crucial, role in the group of developing countries, which places itself in a position that contrasts the Western developed countries’ bloc, if it is not a completely opposite one. As we have observed above, China has already taken a more active role in the international society, and associated itself with the global network. Within these relationships, China is a late-coming, an emerging power, among the developed countries, but also in the group of developing countries, China’s economic power enables it to act as a leader. Given this dichotomy, what, then, exactly is China’s identity?

There is an ancient Chinese saying that ‘it would be better to be a rooster’s crest, rather than an oxtail (ning wei ji shou, bu wei niu hou 宁为鸡首, 不为牛后)’, meaning that one would prefer to be at the top of a weaker group, rather than at the bottom of a stronger one. China’s role in the developing group is like a ‘rooster’s crest’, as it is at the top, has initiatives and discourse power; but, in the developed bloc, China is more like the ‘oxtail’, as it is at the bottom, has to adapt to the existing order and learn the rules. Another view advocates a so-called ‘G2’³⁵⁹, which makes China an equal superpower to the US, or similar to that stated above, making them a pair of ‘ox horns’, though it seems that this idea does not have too many proponents³⁶⁰. However, China’s economic power cannot be neglected, and its initiatives to express its preferences in international affairs make it more confident in its dealings with the Western bloc. Therefore, despite China affirming that it would not seek world hegemony, what China would do after its rise to become a great power concerns the world, especially for those founders and supporters of the current global order. For them, the concern is not what China currently has, but what China has not yet revealed, or what China has not yet obtained. The uncertainty of China’s future role is a major source of the resistance against China’s rise.

³⁵⁸ Li Ronglin, ed., *China Development Report on South-South Cooperation 2013: Trade Relations between China and Other Developing Countries* (China Commerce and Trade Press, 2014), p7, 14, available at <http://www.ecdc.net.cn/doc/sscreport.pdf>, accessed 5 December 2014.

³⁵⁹ C. Fred Bergsten, “A Partnership of Equals: How Washington Should Respond to China’s Economic Challenge”, *Foreign Affairs* 87, no.4 (2008): 57-69; see also C. Fred Bergsten, “Two’s Company”, *Foreign Affairs* 88, no.5 (2009): 169-170.

³⁶⁰ Elizabeth Economy and Adam Segal, “The G-2 Mirage: Why the United States and China Are Not Ready to Upgrade Ties”, *Foreign Affairs* 88, no.3 (2009) 88(3): 14-23.

At present, what can be seen is the momentum of China's rise³⁶¹, its aim to adapt some of the contents of the international institutions and export its own diplomatic principles, but also that it is too costly for China to attempt any revolutionary reform. It also proposes a 'new model of major country relations (*xin xing da guo guan xi* 新型大国关系)' that will attempt to find a new way to sort out the dilemma between the rising powers and the existing great powers. The content of this new relationship is still under discussion³⁶², but its spirit, as China's foreign minister said, is to 'replace the conflicts by cooperation, and replace monopolization by mutual wins'.³⁶³ In practice, China's regional and inter-regional policies, such as the 'one belt and one road' project and the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, also show that China is willing to provide common benefits and construct a multilateral framework for regional cooperation and economic integration. China is on its way to taking greater responsibility, and also its leadership along with it. The process of its rise will bring a series of changes in identity to the global order; not only China's, but also the relative transformations in other countries' identities, especially the Western one, and this has become the source of their concerns about China's rise

What concerns China, on the other hand, is how to ease the West's concerns. China needs a relatively friendly environment to realise its 'Chinese dream', therefore it is crucial to find a new way to prevent any 'tragedies'³⁶⁴ in the transition of power. However, this will not be an easy process, for the clashes do not only exist in the competition for resources and powers but also in its values and discourses, in terms of which China holds a different perspective from that of the West. These different values originate from China's own historical experiences and ideologies and, furthermore, attach palpable Chinese characteristics to its foreign policies, such as its non-conditionality and non-interference, which will be discussed in the next section. From the discussion above, we can see that while China is gathering resources to strengthen its

³⁶¹ There is also suspicions of it, for instance, see David Shambaugh, "The Coming Chinese Crackup", available at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-coming-chinese-crack-up-1425659198>, accessed 10 March, 2015; and there are also opposite opinions, see Stephen Harner, "Why David Shambaugh's 'Coming Chinese Crackup' Case Is Wrong", available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stephenharner/2015/03/10/why-david-shambaugh-s-coming-chinese-crackup-case-is-wrong/>, accessed 10 March 2015.

³⁶² Yang, Jiemian. "A New Type of Great Power Relationship: Constructing Theory, Strategy and Policy", *China International Studies* 3 (2013): 13-23; Chen, Zhimin. "Analysis of the new model of major power relations", *International Review* 5 (2013): 18-24; Rudd, Kevin. "Beyond the Pivot: A New Strategic Road map for U.S.-Chinese Relations", *Foreign Affairs* 92, no.2 (2013): 9-15.

³⁶³ See http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/zyxw_602251/t1247689.shtml, accessed 24 March 2015.

³⁶⁴ John Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics*, 97-98.

power, it has also realised the importance of exporting its international political norms, and that the content of the norms is as liberal as it proclaims——multilateral cooperation and international democracy——but that the purpose of the norms is, however, realistic, which serves to pave the way for its rise and consequently equips China with the soft power to become a great power.

4.3.2.2 The EU: a Normative Power?

The EU has long been regarded as a normative power, but also has been challenged on its capabilities to fulfil its expectations.³⁶⁵ Here we intend to explore its identity in terms of its strategy: besides its inability to be a genuine normative power, does it have other strategic orientations? In other words, except for its role as a normative power, what other kinds of power does it prefer to exercise? And what capacity does it have to support its strategies?

The notion of ‘normative power EU’ was introduced by Manners in 2002³⁶⁶, but the academic debate over the EU’s characteristics had pre-existed over a relatively long period. Duchêne argued that the European Community is a ‘civilian power’ which has an advantage in economics, which it can use to build an ‘idée force’ that would influence others, rather than coercing them.³⁶⁷ Galtung also asserted that the EC’s ‘ideological power’ enables it to impact on others’ wills.³⁶⁸ Given the context of international politics in that period, these arguments made sense in terms of illustrating the EC’s capabilities in the Cold War. Since the Community did not acquire a strong military power, what it could do was to implement its economic and ideological power to shape world politics. Still, in order to explore the EU’s international identity, Manners argued that it is important to focus on what the EU is, rather than what it does.³⁶⁹ During the Cold War, the EC represented itself as a crucial actor in the Western bloc

³⁶⁵ Hill Christopher, “The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe's International Role”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, (1993) 31(3), 305-28.

³⁶⁶ Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31, no. 3 (1993): 305-328.

³⁶⁷ Francois Duchêne, “The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence”, in *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems before the Community*, eds., Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (Macmillan, 1973).

³⁶⁸ Johan Galtung, *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1973), 33-36.

³⁶⁹ Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?”, 252.

of liberal economies and pluralist democracies. In a further step, the end of the Cold War and the triumph over Socialism reinforced the role of the normative power of the EC as a winner, legitimatizing the validity of its norms. Therefore, as Manners argued, even though the EC/EU does not wield its civilian instruments, its existence as a distinct power that upholds the principles of democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, has already empowered the EU to define what is 'normal' in world politics.³⁷⁰ Undoubtedly, these normative principles have established the EU's normative basis; however, the EU is not a normative idol that is good enough for people to worship, but is in fact a multifaceted entity that has diverse strategic needs in various respects. Promoting norms and enhancing its normative power is one of its strategic dimensions, but should not be all.

To explore the EU's multiple faces, scholars have listed various assertions about what kind of power the EU is. From a neo-realist perspective, the EU has been described as a collective instrument for the member states to shape the external milieu.³⁷¹ Bailes also shows the EU's increasing demands on improving its military power through ESDP, by which its behaviour contradicts its normative principles.³⁷² In terms of its economic might and market size, the EU has been regarded as a trade power that enjoys a dominant position in the global political economy and also plays a major role in trade negotiations.³⁷³ Other scholars have claimed that the EU is a realist power in trade power which emphasises 'geoeconomic and mercantilist considerations'.³⁷⁴ In the sphere of environmental issues, the EU is a world leader in dealing with climate change.³⁷⁵ When examining its internal institutions and diplomatic preferences,

³⁷⁰ Ibid 60, 242 and 253.

³⁷¹ Adrian Hyde-Price, "'Normative' power Europe: a realist critique", *Journal of European Public Policy* 3, no. 2 (2006): 217-234.

³⁷² Alyson J.K. Bailes, "The EU and a 'Better World': What Role for the European Security and Defence Policy?" *International Affairs* 84, no. 1 (2008): 115-130.

³⁷³ Sophie Meunier and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, "The European Union as a Trade Power", in *International Relations and the European Union*, eds., Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 275-298; Ole Elgström, "Outsiders' Perceptions of the European Union in International Trade Negotiations", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, (2007) 45(4), 949-67.

³⁷⁴ Hubert Zimmermann, "Realist Power Europe? The EU in the Negotiations about China's and Russia's WTO Accession", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 45, no. 4 (2007): 813-832..

³⁷⁵ Bertil Killian and Ole Elgström, "Still a Green Leader? The European Union's Role in International Climate Negotiations". *Cooperation and Conflict* 45, no. 3 (2010): 255-273.

the EU can be characterized as an ‘incipient civilian power’,³⁷⁶ which reaffirms Duchêne’s definition of ‘civilian power EC’ after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

There is a large group of diverse research on the EU’s characteristic as a power, and these arguments show that the content of the EU’s power is more than a single aspect of normative power, but a multi-layered entity that depends on specific issues and different regions.³⁷⁷ Furthermore, these debates also reflect the absence of explicit criteria to define what kind of power the EU is, and thereby challenge the legitimacy of the notion of ‘normative power EU’.³⁷⁸ To find the answer to this question, Erikson applied a cosmopolitanism approach to assess whether the EU’s foreign policies is conducted in the ‘constraints of a higher ranking law’.³⁷⁹ The point of this argument conforms to, but also goes beyond, Duchêne’s idea that civilian power should democratize international contractual politics³⁸⁰, it raises the analysis to a supranational level. The finding was two-sided, the EU’s diplomatic actions are not always consistent with its normative values, but do have a promising future.

Among the efforts to set the criteria for assessing the normative legitimacy of the EU’s foreign policy, Tocci’s research was relatively comprehensive. She set three dimensions of ‘normative goals’, ‘normative means’ and ‘normative impact’, and by using these parameters and applying eight case studies, she managed to assess the EU’s identities as ‘normative’, ‘realpolitik’, ‘imperialistic’ and ‘status quo’.³⁸¹ Her work reveals that the EU is a ‘multifaceted foreign

³⁷⁶ Mario Telò, “The EU: a civilian power’s diplomatic action after the Lisbon Treaty. Bridging internal complexity and international convergence”, in *The EU’s Foreign Policy: What kind of power and diplomatic action?*, eds., Mario Telò and Frederik Ponjaert, (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 39-40.

³⁷⁷ Natalia Chaban, Ole Elgström, Serena Kelly and Lai Suet Yi, “Images of the EU beyond its Borders: Issue-Specific and Regional Perceptions of European Union Power and Leadership”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 3 (2013): 433-451; Henrik Larson, “The EU as a Normative Power and the Research on External Perceptions: The Missing Link”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52, no. 4 (2014): 896-910.

³⁷⁸ Helene Sjursen, “What kind of power?” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 169-181; also Helene Sjursen, “The EU as a ‘normative’ power: how can this be?” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 235-251.

³⁷⁹ Erik Oddvar Eriksen, “The EU - A cosmopolitan polity?” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 252-269.

³⁸⁰ Francois Duchêne, “The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence”, in *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems before the Community*, eds., Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 19.

³⁸¹ Nathalie Tocci, *Who is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor? The European Union and its Global Partners*, 1-75.

policy actor', and thus if we intend to follow Manners' question and explore 'what the EU is', we might find that the EU is not as simple as a huge 'elephant', as Emerson portrays³⁸², but rather a hydra with many heads. The EU plans to be an active actor in a multipolar world, especially when it deals with powers like the US, China, Russia and other emerging powers; it has to tackle the crises in the Ukraine and Syria, and also threats of terrorism; it needs to enhance job opportunities, economic growth and investment, as well as deepening the internal market and the Economic and Monetary Union; it aims to establish free trade agreements with the US and strengthen commercial ties with other economies; it also has initiatives regarding migration, climate change and energy security, etc.³⁸³

Manners also realised the multifaceted nature of the EU and suggests a reflexive dimension of the EU's international identity³⁸⁴, and also updated the connotation of 'normative power' along with the evolution of the world politics³⁸⁵. But the 'difference engine' is not sufficient to explicitly illustrate the EU's strategic identities. When we examine this hybrid entity, it is clear that norms such as the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights³⁸⁶ lie at the core of its foreign policies, and we can also discover the different, or even competitive, initiatives among the institutions and member states.³⁸⁷ It is necessary to be aware that the EU can gain an advanced position in world politics when it wields its normative power, but it cannot be separated from its other initiatives and demands. How, then, can these diverse dimensions be associated or coordinated? Youngs suggests that 'constructivist and rationalist explanations might be combined to account for the way in which instrumental choices are made within a range of common normative understandings... [and therefore] normative and instrumentalist dynamics can be seen to set parameters for each other'.³⁸⁸

³⁸² Michael Emerson, "Introduction". In *The Elephant and the Bear Try Again: Options for a New Agreement Between the EU and Russia*, ed. Michael Emerson (Centre for European Policy Studies, 2006), 1.

³⁸³ Specific initiatives see "Commission Work Programme 2015: a new start", Strasbourg, 16.12.2014, COM(2014) 910 final, available at http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2015_en.pdf, accessed 2 February 2015.

³⁸⁴ Ian Manners and Richard Whitman, "The 'difference engine': Constructing and representing the international identity of the European union", *Journal of European Public Policy* 10, no. 3 (2003): 380-404.

³⁸⁵ Ian Manners, "Global Europa: Mythology of the European Union in World Politics", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48, no. 1 (2010): 67-87.

³⁸⁶ Article 2, Article 21, TEU.

³⁸⁷ That as discussed in Chapter 1.

³⁸⁸ Richard Youngs, "Normative Dynamics and Strategic Interests in the EU's External Identity", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 2 (2004): 415-435.

4.3.2.3 Summary

Comparing China and the EU's strategic type identities, we find a commonality between them: China is not simply a 'realist' power that seeks the next global hegemony and ignores the existing order, but it endeavours to adapt itself to international society. The EU, on the other hand, cannot merely be regarded as a normative power, as it also has multifaceted strategies. Therefore, it is possible for both sides to promote their strategic partnership to a higher level. However, in the meantime, the diverse content of their strategies has different weights. For instance, while both actors value economies and norms, China may emphasise economic development, whilst the EU takes the norms more seriously. This kind of asymmetry means that they lack 'shared knowledge' in terms of strategy, which will affect the compatibility of their role identities, which will be analysed in the next chapter. Moreover, the asymmetry in role identities will generate obstacles in the negotiation for lifting the EU's arms embargo on China, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

4.3.3 Values

We have discussed the differences between the Chinese and the EU political regimes and strategies, to some extent, these differences are attributed to their different values in their perception of international politics. These conceptual gaps originate from their own historical development and cultural traditions, and thereby construct different type identities. This section aims to explore their type identities in terms of values and analyse how they would shape their foreign policies. However, the range of values can be diverse, so the discussion below focuses on sovereignty, human rights and democracy as concepts to illustrate the biggest differences between China and the EU.

4.3.3.1 China: An Eastern Culture with Westphalian Norms

The reason for describing China as an Eastern culture with Westphalian norms is that China has its own civilization and distinct perceptions of international principles, and it uses sovereignty and nationalism— notions that originated from Westphalian treaties—to defend its

culture and perceptions. By reviewing the cotemporary history of the PRC, it is noticeable that the foundation of this country is at least partly based on principles and norms that were learned from the West: China used nationalism to go against feudalism and imperialism, and it used sovereignty to go against colonialism. These two norms, which have been once developed by the Western nations, have now become strong instruments for China to resist the Western powers in the revolutionary time from 1911 to 1949, and the defence of its sovereignty is a way to legitimate its state governance. Sovereignty, therefore, is a concept that was invented by the West, and has now become a defensive instrument for China to keep Western powers from interfering in its domestic governance and challenging its core interests.

Surprisingly, the reference to the Eastern culture was an instrument that China (re)began to use quite recently. Since China has been forced by the Western powers to open its gates, for decades the Chinese nationalists have turned to the West to seek governance models to apply in reforming China. Confucius, along with many other Chinese traditional cultural aspects, had been harshly criticized and abandoned by Chinese elites, especially in the New Culture Movement of the 1910s and 1920s, and the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. After being abandoned for many decades, it was not till 2004 before the Confucius culture was re-evaluated at the national level,³⁸⁹ and China's efforts to construct its identity as an Eastern country began. In the post-Cold War era, the influence of socialist ideology has decreased, whilst in the meantime Confucius, as an important symbol along with other Chinese traditional culture, has given the government considerable ideational resources with which to consolidate a mass ideology and reorganise its societal norms.

Moreover, in the external dimension, this transformation could be used to build its exceptional characteristics as a distinct civilization, which has reason to explain and defend its different political regime and international behaviour when they are criticized or doubted by the Western powers—the divergences in politics can be attributed to the differences in cultures. It would be easier to understand this by noting that China links the Confucian culture to the diversities

³⁸⁹ Cases such as the establishment of the Confucius Institute around the world and the Confucius statue in Tiananmen Square in 2011. Although the statue has been removed, the revaluation of the Confucius has become a new principle to develop the national cultural strategy. See Xi Jinping's speech at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-09/24/c_1112612018.htm, accessed 25 February 2015.

of world culture. It advocates respect for different cultures, and it argues that there are no universal rules, each country has its own rights and reasons to build its regime, and its choice should be respected by others. Furthermore, exporting Eastern culture is a relatively more acceptable and civil way to increase its soft power, rather than exporting a socialist ideology.

³⁹⁰ Explaining the spirit of ‘peace’ and ‘equality’ in China’s traditional culture could also be considered as designed to ease the concerns and suspicions about China’s rise.

The reason that we consider sovereignty within the discussion is because it reflects a huge difference between the EU and China’s perceptions. The EU is a supranational polity that pools sovereignty together. On the other hand, China is an adherent of traditional sovereignty, and views the notion of sovereignty very differently from the EU. In China’s interpretation, the content of sovereignty is that of ‘territorial integrity, non-interference, independence and equality’, China highly values the principle of sovereignty and takes it as the core guideline for its diplomatic policies.³⁹¹ Particularly with regards to the non-interference principle, the Chinese government has invoked it to reject the West’s criticism of China’s status of human rights.

It is true that in an interdependent world, one country cannot fully exclude external interference; in spite of this, China takes external interference as an erosion of the government’s legitimacy. This belief originates from ‘the century of humiliation’, when China was partly colonized by the Western powers and lost the control over its own domestic affairs. This period of history forced the Chinese to accept the notion of sovereignty and to use it to defend its autonomy. Along with the establishment of the PRC, the Communist Party takes defending China’s autonomy as one of the resources of its legitimacy. However, it still could not exclude external interference as the Soviet Union maintained its pressure on China’s domestic and external affairs. Even after the Cold War, its identity as a socialist country still draws criticisms from the West, as they hold different values. Therefore, although modern China was founded more

³⁹⁰ Although some overseas Confucius Institutes do have been closed for different political reasons.

³⁹¹ Pan Zhongqi, “Managing the Conceptual Gap on Sovereignty in China-EU Relations”, *Asia Europe Journal*, 8, no. 2 (2010): 227-243; Ayse Kaya, “The EU’s China problem: A battle over norms”, *International Politics*, 51, no. 2 (2014): 214-233; Allen Carlson, “Helping to Keep the Peace (Albeit Reluctantly): China’s Recent Stance on Sovereignty and Multilateral Intervention”, *Pacific Affairs* 77, no.1 (2004): 9-27; Men Jing, “The EU and China: mismatched partners?”, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21, no. 74 (2012): 333-349.

than 60 years ago, it still remains in a stage of defending its sovereignty, rather than sharing or pooling it. The duty to maintain the integrity of its sovereignty is not merely a necessary task for the Chinese government, but also a historical burden. As a Chinese scholar observed, this is just because of the fact that China's sovereignty has been undermined for a long time, and now China is an adherent to its traditional sovereignty.³⁹²

For China, sovereignty and human rights are related, or more specifically, while China is engaging other polities on the issue of human rights, it is related to the non-interference principle of sovereignty. Moreover, China has its own interpretation of the content of human rights that is considerably different from that of the West. Since 1997, China's State Council Information Office has issued nine white papers about the Progress in China's human rights. Those papers show how human rights has been interpreted in Chinese discourse (see Table 4).

Table 4. Content of the White Papers on Progress in China's Human Rights in Nine Years

Year	Content
1996	Rights to Subsistence and Development; Democratic Rights; Judicial Protection; Rights of Labors; Educational Rights; Rights of Woman and Children; Rights of Ethnic Minorities.
1998	Rights to Subsistence and Development; Political Rights; Judicial Protection; Economic, Societal and Cultural Rights; Rights of Woman and Children; Rights of Ethnic Minorities; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.
2000	Rights to Subsistence and Development; Political Rights; Judicial Protection; Economic, Societal and Cultural Rights; Rights of Woman and Children; Rights of Ethnic Minorities; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.
2003	Rights to Subsistence and Development; Civil and Political Rights; Judicial Protection; Economic, Societal and Cultural Rights; Rights of Woman and

³⁹² Dai Bingran. "Rethinking the issue of sovereignty", *Chinese Journal of European Studies* 5, (2003): 33-35.

	Children; Rights of Ethnic Minorities; Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.
2004	Rights to Subsistence and Development; Civil and Political Rights; Judicial Protection; Economic, Societal and Cultural Rights; Rights of Ethnic Minorities; Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.
2009	Rights to Subsistence and Development; Civil and Political Rights; Judicial Protection; Economic, Societal and Cultural Rights; Rights of Ethnic Minorities; Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.
2012	Protection of Human Rights in Economic Construction, Political Construction, Cultural Services, Social Development and Ecological Progress; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.
2013	Rights to Development; Rights to Social Security; Democratic Rights; Rights to Freedom of Speech; Rights of the Person; Rights of Ethnic Minorities; Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Rights to a Clean and Healthy Environment; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.
2014	Rights to Development; Rights of the Person; Democratic Rights; Rights of Impartial Trial; Rights of Ethnic Minorities; Rights of Woman, Children and Senior Citizens; Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Rights to a Clean and Healthy Environment; Foreign Exchanges and Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.

Source: The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, available at <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/rqbps/index.htm>, accessed 9 June 2015.

From the table, two important findings emerge: first, the rights to subsistence and development have always been of main importance. The specific content of the rights to subsistence and development encompasses economic development, an improvement of consumption and the rise of people's living standards (including civil income increase, poverty reduction and the

improvement in health, medical care and so forth). This content can be found in each of these papers. China's first human rights white paper was issued in 1991, in which it is stated that the rights to subsistence is a prior human right that the Chinese people have been fighting for.³⁹³ After more than two decades of development, the word 'subsistence' has not been used since 2013, but the right to development remains the priority in the list of China's human rights. These kinds of human rights have been clearly attached to Chinese characteristics, whose emphasis on social/collective rights is different from the EU's emphasis on fundamental individual rights.³⁹⁴

Second, these papers did not consider sensitive topics—such as democracy or political rights—as taboos, but interpreted them with Chinese characteristics. In the specific articles of political rights and democratic rights, China emphasises its institutionalization of the National People's Congress and the People's Political Consultative Conference, and the promotion of the communitarian democracy, which does not conform to the Western model.

These are the findings and differences that white papers highlight, but what the underlying divergences of the perceptions of human rights between the EU and China actually are? Why do Chinese discourses emphasise rights to subsistence and development? And why does China also claim that it has successfully established political and democratic rights? Answers to those questions can be found in the different understanding of human rights between China and the EU. Scholars have pointed out several differences in these understandings,³⁹⁵ among which the

³⁹³ The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, "The Status of China's Human Rights", November 1991, available at <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/qgbps/Document/1435245/1435245.htm>, accessed 9 June 2015.

³⁹⁴ "Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union", *Official Journal of the European Union*, 30/3/2010, C83, available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0389:0403:EN:PDF>, accessed 9 June 2015.

³⁹⁵ Zhang Chi, "The conceptual gap on Human Rights in China-Europe Relations", in *Conceptual Gaps in China-EU Relations: Global Governance, Human Rights and Strategic Partnership*, ed., Zhongqi Pan (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 83-97; Zhu Li-yu and Zhang Xiao-jin, "The similarities and differences of the Chinese and European Union's viewpoints of human rights and the impacts on the relations between China and European Union", *Journal of Chinese Academy of Governance* 4, (2002): 87-90; Shaun Breslin, "Debating Human Security in China: Towards Discursive Power?", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 45, no. 2 (2015): 243-265; Phil C. W. Chan, "Human Rights and Democracy with Chinese Characteristics", *Human Rights Law Review* 13, no. 4 (2013): 645-689; Robert Weatherley, *The Discourse of Human Rights in China: Historical and Ideological Perspectives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 101-131; Henry Rosemont Jr, "Whose democracy? Which rights? A Confucian critique of modern Western liberalism", in *Confucian Ethics: A Comparative Study of Self, Autonomy, and Community*, eds., Kwong-loi Shun and David B. Wong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49-71.

major differences in the Chinese understanding can be summarised as hierarchy in human rights, and an insistence on relativism.

The hierarchy in Chinese human rights discourse implies that China prioritizes collective rights over individual rights, and this explains the superiority of the rights to subsistence and development over other civil rights: Promoting the rights to subsistence and development is actually the promotion of social and economic rights, which represent the collective rights of society. In China, the word ‘*ren* 人’ (human) in *ren quan* 人权 (human rights) refers to *ren min* 人民 (people of the community), rather than *ge ren* 个人 (individual citizens). Therefore, human rights in Chinese discourse refers to the collective rights of people in the community.

This logic can be found in traditional Chinese culture. In Confucian philosophy, a ‘human’s intrinsic essence is not their biological quality, but the social characteristic’³⁹⁶, which is also to say, in order to make the humanity meaningful, that it must have a social identity (role identity), or membership of the community. Within the community, which could be a family, society, or a country, individuals are obliged to serve the collective good, and there are a series of moralities to discipline individuals’ behaviour. For instance, filial piety (*xiao* 孝) requires the individuals not only to respect their parents, but also think of their family interests first; benevolence (*ren* 仁) and righteousness (*yi* 义) encourage individuals not only to love and help others, but even to go as far as to sacrifice their own rights to defend the ‘greater good’; loyalty (*zhong* 忠) demands that individuals not only love their country, but also to prioritize national interests over their own personal interests and rights. Individuals do not only have their rights, but also have the obligation to serve the community, and at the moral level, when individual rights clash with the obligations for the collective good, prioritizing collective obligations is both encouraged and honoured.

Moral considerations are not the only reasons; a pragmatic consideration also matters in explaining why collective rights take precedence over individual rights. It is believed that

³⁹⁶ Hu Weixi. “On Confucian Communitarianism”, *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* 2, no.4 (2006): 33.

without the preservation of collective rights, individual rights cannot be guaranteed.³⁹⁷ In contrast to the Western belief that a community/nation/state is based on individuals, Chinese philosophy believes that collective rights are a prerequisite for individuals. As an ancient Chinese saying claims, ‘no eggs survive when the nest is ruined (*fu chao zhi xia, an you wan luan* 覆巢之下, 安有完卵)’. The logic is as follows: firstly, a human being must have a social identity, and to this end the individual needs to have a family, which is the basic element of a society; then, this individual has to preserve the integrity of the family, because if the family does not exist, the individual’s own existence would be meaningless. The next step is to a larger society or a nation, the family is obliged to defend societal or national rights in order to preserve familial rights, because the family rights will not be safe without the protection of the nation. As implied in the Chinese word of nation-state (*guo jia* 国家, *guo* 国 means nation, and *jia* 家 means family), the nation comes first. This has also been corroborated by history, especially when the Song Dynasty was conquered by the Mongolians, when the Ming Dynasty was ended by the Manchurians, and when China was invaded by other major powers in the late modern period. In those events, along with the collapse of the nation, even the right to life became problematic, let alone respecting other rights such as dignity or freedom of speech.

Therefore, from the Chinese perspective, in order to protect human rights, China needs to first guarantee its collective rights, namely the rights to subsistence and development, and those specific citizen’s rights advocated by the West cannot be well protected if the rights to subsistence and development have not first been secured. This is the reason why, in the past few decades, the Chinese government has focused on economic development and lifting people’s living standards. Based on this strategy, China has been successful in helping hundreds of millions of people shake off poverty, and it has been seen as its biggest achievement in terms of human rights.³⁹⁸ Compared to its circumstances prior to 1949, China has good reasons to be proud of its achievements in this regard. At the societal level, the rapid improvement of material life standards in only a few decades has allowed the people to be able to enjoy a dramatic change within a relatively short time. This enjoyment of material benefits

³⁹⁷ Robert Weatherley, *The Discourse of Human Rights in China: Historical and Ideological Perspectives*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 105-106; Li Yiping and Lv Feiyun. “The connotation and Dialectical relationship between collective interests and individual interests”, *The Journal of the Party School of CPC Jinan* 3, (2000): 61-64.

³⁹⁸ Fifty Years of Progress in China’s Human Rights, issued by The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, February 2000, available at <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/rqbps/Document/1452559/1452559.htm>, accessed 11 June 2015.

makes people happy with their current situation, and show reduced inclination to stop such a trend.

Meanwhile, China also has reasons to complain about Europe's ignorance on this achievement and its criticism on individual cases³⁹⁹——they are not focusing on the same area as China does, and this explains different understandings of China and the EU on human rights exactly: collective rights versus individual rights, and social/economic rights versus civil/political rights. These gaps in understandings can be attributed to China's different identity, namely, a country with Eastern values. But this is not to say that China has abandoned civil/political rights; indeed, as shown in the Table 4, China claims it has also improved its political rights, but just with its own characteristics. The differences in political regime were discussed in the previous sections, but why is China so 'righteously' insisting on its own regime and rejecting the thought of copying Western democracy?

First, China believes in relativism, not so much as an excuse for its communist regime, but rather a genuine belief that stems from the history of revolution. From the perspective of modern democratic countries, China is still relatively young: it became a republic in 1912, but spent most of the initial years fighting wars, and suffered a ten-year chaos of Cultural Revolution in its middle age. Therefore, its political regime had been undermined many times, and was not stable. Since its founding in 1912, the republic did not stop learning from foreign regimes. Sun Yat-sen, the leading founder of the Republic of China, was inspired by French revolutionary thought and Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and also studied European and American representative democracy, which constituted the basis of his design for China's political regime.⁴⁰⁰ Based on this kind of ideology and knowledge, he instructed the Kuomintang (the Chinese Nationalist Party) to build a democratic republic, but the country was torn by warlords and democracy was ruined. The country was reunified in 1928 whilst the regime was in a phase of political tutelage as Sun Yat-sen designed. However, the Nanking

³⁹⁹ Liu Jie. "Evaluating China's Human Rights on the basic facts", *People's Daily*, page 4, 18th May 2012, available at http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2012-05/18/content_1053245.htm, assessed 12 June 2015.

⁴⁰⁰ Edmund S. K. Fung "The Dictatorial Regime", in *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China, 1929–1949*, ed., Edmund S. K. Fung (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 32; Zhang Lei. "On Sun Yat-sen's Principle of People's Rights", *Historical Research* 1, (1980): 5.

regime was not as democratic as expected, turning into a ‘military-authoritarian regime’ under the command of Chiang Kai-shek.⁴⁰¹

The Communist Party of China, in another way, learned from Marxism and the Leninism, and took instructions from the Communist International. But due to a lack of knowledge about China’s local situation, the instructions from Communist International led the Chinese Communist Party to massive failure, both in a political and military sense. After the Zunyi Conference (遵义会议), the Communist Party abandoned following the lead of the Communist International, and started to associate the Communist theory with China’s own condition, which ultimately allowed the CPC to survive. Thus what Chinese revolutionaries have learned from ‘learning from the West’ is to associate Western theories with China’s own condition. Both Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping have emphasised the principles required to adapt Marxism, Leninism and Soviet Model to China’s context, learn the theories dialectically and build the regime with China’s own characteristics.⁴⁰² After a decade of ‘Cultural Revolution (1966-1967)’, the country finally established a relatively stable regime on the basis of the Soviet Model, but one that still has its own unique characteristics.⁴⁰³ For a country that has experimented with both capitalism and socialism, and finally found its own way to keep society stable and developing, it is reasonable for China to value the conditions of its own country. Full acceptance of Western norms without critique would be considered naive and might very well lead to failure. Therefore, this is the reason why the Chinese government keep asserting the importance of relativism, emphasising the need to respect China’s conditions, and resisting the transplantation of Western democracy into its regime.

Second, from the perspective of class nature, the CPC would not accept the multi-party system, because the CPC claims that it represents the people, and that it is just the people who rule the country. Therefore, if other parties gained the ability to govern, this would not only mean the

⁴⁰¹ Lloyd. E. Eastman “Nationalist China during the Nanking Decade, 1927-1937,” in *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, eds., Lloyd. E. Eastman, Jerome Chen, Suzanne Pepper and Lyman P. Van Slyke (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 21.

⁴⁰² Specific speech and ideas of the leaders can be found in Liu, Shulin. “Soviet Model Socialism and Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, *Leading Journal of Ideological and Theoretical Education*, 2009, Vol. 3, online resource available at <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/41038/9168611.html>, accessed 19 June 2015.

⁴⁰³ For the differences between the Soviet Model and Chinese characteristics, see Huang, Zongliang. “From Soviet Model to Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, *CPC History Studies*, 2010, Vol. 7, p.38.

loss of the governing position, but also the loss of the CPC's class nature. As stated in the constitution, China is 'a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants'.⁴⁰⁴ The people's democratic dictatorship originated from the Leninism 'Dictatorship of the proletariat', but is somehow different from it, as in the 'people's democratic dictatorship', it is not only the working class who have the dictatorship, but also other classes. In addressing the 'people's democratic dictatorship', Mao indicated that this dictatorship was to dictate 'squirearchy' and 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie', and that 'people' constitutes 'the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie'.⁴⁰⁵ Furthermore, the 'Three Represents' thoughts theoretically expanded the class nature of the CPC, making it represent not just the four classes, but the majority of the people as a whole. As a consequence of this party theory, there was no need for another party to represent other interest groups, and there is no room for another competing party. Hence, a multi-party system is not an option that China, or its communist government, can accept.

4.3.3.2 The EU: a Western entity with post-modern characteristics

To say the EU is a Western entity is to indicate that it has different understandings of certain norms compared to China. These norms include, but are not confined to, human rights, democracy, the rule of law and so forth. Human rights and democracy have multiple definitions and forms in the Western context, but this section does not intend to go through the entirety of its types and dimensions, but rather underline the differing elements between the EU and China.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union lists the content of the human rights that are recognised by the EU.⁴⁰⁶ As analysed above, the major difference in the principles of human rights is that the EU focuses on individual and civil rights, whilst China emphasises collective and economic rights. It is argued that human rights are naturally inherent to life, thus they are primary to the rights that are generated in a society or state, and consequently take

⁴⁰⁴ The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, available at http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm, accessed 26 June 2015.

⁴⁰⁵ Mao Zedong. "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", June 3, 1949, in *Selected works of Mao Zedong*, Vol.4, available at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64185/66618/4488978.html>, assessed 24 June 2015.

⁴⁰⁶ European Commission, "Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union", *Official Journal of the European Communities*, 18 December 2000, C 364/01.

precedence over collective rights.⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, given the nature of human beings and the liberalist philosophy, it has been suggested that human rights are universal, and the promotion of human rights should be applied on a global level.⁴⁰⁸ This universalism differs from China's belief in relativism, which emphasises the conditions of a specific country.

These divergences also exist in the EU's perception of democracy. We have introduced China's political regime in section 4.3.1.1, which showed that China has its own distinctive perception of democracy. Within the scope of the EU, the types of democracy vary from semi-presidential democracy to parliamentary democracy, within which there are forms of parliamentary republic and constitutional monarchies. Despite the diversity, what matters in this Chapter are the major differences compared to China's perception of democracy or, in other words, those principles that the Chinese government refuses to accept. The Chinese official media, People's Daily (*Renmin Ribao* 人民日报), has had a series of debates on the political institutions, and the conclusion clearly stated that multi-party system and the separation of the legislative, executive and judiciary powers are not suitable for China's political environment.⁴⁰⁹ Therefore, the multi-party system and the separation of powers are the main characteristics that the Western political systems possess but that China does not. Chinese leaders such as Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, have emphasised that China should not imitate the Western political model, and should instead remain committed to the Chinese political model.⁴¹⁰ These statements, as observers indicate, imply that China considers political institutions as part of its own domestic affairs, and does not accept foreign intervention from the West.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ Jack Donnelly, "Human rights and human dignity: An analytic critique of non-Western conceptions of human rights," *American Political Science Review* 76, no. 2 (1982): 303-316.

⁴⁰⁸ Anthony Langlois, "Human Rights Universalism", in *The Ashgate research companion to ethics and international relations*, ed., Patrick Hayden (Routledge 2009), 201-214; John Tasioulas, "Human rights, universality and the values of personhood: Retracing Griffin's steps". *European Journal of Philosophy*, 10, no. 1 (2002): 79-100; Jack Donnelly, *Universal human rights in theory and practice* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 7-39.

⁴⁰⁹ See debates entitled "深入解答六个为什么 (In-depth explanation of the six whys)", available at <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/40557/145802/index.html>, assessed 27 June 2015.

⁴¹⁰ Hu, Jintao. "正确认识和处理中国共产党和民主党派的关系 (Properly recognise and handle the relationship between the CPC and other democratic parties)", available at <http://www.rmzxb.com.cn/c/2014-02-26/298115.shtml>; Xinhua Net, "习近平在布鲁日欧洲学院的演讲 (Xi Jinping's speech at College of Europe in Bruges)", 1 April 2014, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-04/01/c_1110054309.htm, assessed 28 June 2015.

⁴¹¹ Stefanie Weil and Yijia Jing, "The EU and China's Perceptions of Democracy and Their Impact on China-EU Relations", in *Conceptual Gaps in China-EU Relations: Global Governance, Human Rights and Strategic Partnerships*, ed., Zhongqi Pan (London: Palgrave macmillan, 2012), 113-127.

On the contrary, however, the EU has a post-modern value in promoting human rights and democracy at the global scale. Here, the ‘post-modern value’ mainly refers to the EU’s understanding of sovereignty. As stated in the last section, sovereignty is a product of the Peace of Westphalia, which gives the sovereign state exclusive power to counter external interventions. As for the EU, during the process of its integration, member states transferred elements of their sovereignties to the EU, hence the sovereignty is not indivisible.⁴¹² Along with the reinforcement of the EU’s competences in various areas, the EU has impacting greater ability to impact on the member states’ policy making, particularly in terms of trade, thus the exclusive power of the traditional sovereignty has been declined. This supranational form of governance has been described as a ‘post-modern’ characteristic of the EU.⁴¹³ Consequently, the EU views the concept of sovereignty differently in to other countries—China, for example—who still uphold Westphalian norms.

This perception of sovereignty strongly influences the EU’s foreign policy, particularly in terms of intervention with human rights and the promotion of democracy. In practice, the EU has implemented a series of assistance programmes. For instance, the European Commission launched the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programme, which was intended to help certain target countries in their transition to democratic, market-oriented economies.⁴¹⁴ A similar programme was applied in the Mediterranean countries under the framework of the MEDA programme.⁴¹⁵ Both programmes have ultimately been integrated into the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). On a worldwide scale, the EU cooperates with countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement (formerly known as the Lomé Convention, which was superseded by the Cotonou Agreement in 2000).⁴¹⁶

⁴¹² Zhongqi Pan, Managing the conceptual gap on sovereignty in China–EU relations, 235.

⁴¹³ James A. Caporaso, The European Union and forms of state: Westphalian, regulatory or post - modern? *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 4, no. 1 (1996): 29-52.

⁴¹⁴ Details on Joint Research Centre, European Commission, available at <https://nuclear.jrc.ec.europa.eu/tipins/programmes/tacis>, assessed 29 June 2015.

⁴¹⁵ Details on EUR-Lex, available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:r15006>, assessed 2 July 2015.

⁴¹⁶ Details on ACP - The Cotonou Agreement, International cooperation and development, European Commission, available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/african-caribbean-and-pacific-acp-region/cotonou-agreement_en, assessed 2 December 2015.

The EU has promoted human rights and democracy in these recipient states, but meanwhile it also went beyond their sovereignties and intervened in their domestic policies. These programmes have shown the EU's characteristics as a Western entity with post-modern characteristics, which inspire the EU in its pursuit of normative interests beyond borders and territories. Therefore, these characteristics as mentioned above, also conform to the EU's type identity as a normative power. As will be illustrated in the next Chapter, the EU also attempted to promote human rights and political reform in China through constructive engagement, but the outcome was not as satisfactory as the EU had originally expected, the process and the reasons for which will be analysed in detail later.

4.3.3.3 Summary

As discussed above, we can see the differences between the EU and China in terms of their respective values and cultures. In its long history, China has nurtured its own civilization, which has influenced its society for thousands of years. It can adapt to the external environment, in a similar manner to how the revolutionaries learned from the West. However, it was because of the very process of learning from the West that made the revolutionaries believe that it was crucial to insist on relativism and building the country on its own terms. In order to fulfil this belief, and protect the right to build their own country, the authorities appealed to 'sovereignty'—a Westphalian principle innovated by the West—to prevent intervention from the outside powers. The history of the 'humiliation century' and the needs to maintain the government's legitimacy have increased both the people's and government's willingness to uphold the principle of sovereignty. However, when the EU's perspective is considered, it has largely divergent understandings in principles such as human rights and democracy. Moreover, the EU has gone beyond the phase of defending the national sovereignty, and has already begun pooling sovereignty and integrating it into a supranational polity. In contrast to China, the EU appeals to a post-modern value to conduct its international actions. So given its universal values and normative identity, it is not surprising to see the EU and China clash with each other in terms of human rights and democracy.

4.3.4 Economy

China and the EU are two of the largest economies in the world. The EU consists of member states who are developed countries. China, on the other hand, despite its rapid growth, remains a developing country. Their economic identities can have a material, and also a fundamental, influence on the construction of diplomatic concepts and policy.

4.3.4.1 China: A Skinny Giant

China has two leading major figures in the economic area: GDP, and GDP growth. The former suggests China is the second biggest economy in the world; the latter shows how fast China's economy has developed in the four decades since China established diplomatic relations with the European Community. Yet China still has a low GDP per capita, which implies that it remains a developing country. This makes China a complicated economy; on the one hand, it is a giant economy, but on the other its identity as a developing country leaves it a series of problems and at a certain disadvantage, as will be illustrated by the data below. In every figure, five economies are selected: China and the EU, as well as France, Germany and the UK as the troika of the EU's economy.

Figure 3 shows the GDP comparison among China, the EU and three European countries. In 1975, when China and the European Community initially established diplomatic relations, China's GDP was only 0.16 trillion US dollars. At that time, China was still in the chaos of Cultural Revolution, its GDP was low and its growth was unstable—the GDP growth was 2.3% in 1974, 8.7% in 1975 and -1.6% in 1976, which demonstrates this economic instability.⁴¹⁷ At the same time, the GDP was 0.36 trillion in France, 0.49 in Germany, 0.24 in the UK and, in total, it was 1.93 trillion for the whole European Community. Any one of these being larger than that of China. France's economy was double China's, and Germany's was triple. After 40 years, China's GDP reached 10.36 trillion US dollars in 2014, which is more than half of the EU's combined GDP (\$18.46 trillion), and more than the sum of Germany's (\$3.85 trillion), the UK's (\$2.94 trillion) and France's (\$2.83 trillion). This dramatic change in GDP shows that China has now become a major economic power.

⁴¹⁷ Data source: World Development Indicators, DataBank, the World Bank. And National Bureau of Statistics of China, assessed 4 December 2015.

Figure 3. GDP of China, the EU and EU member states in 1975 and 2014

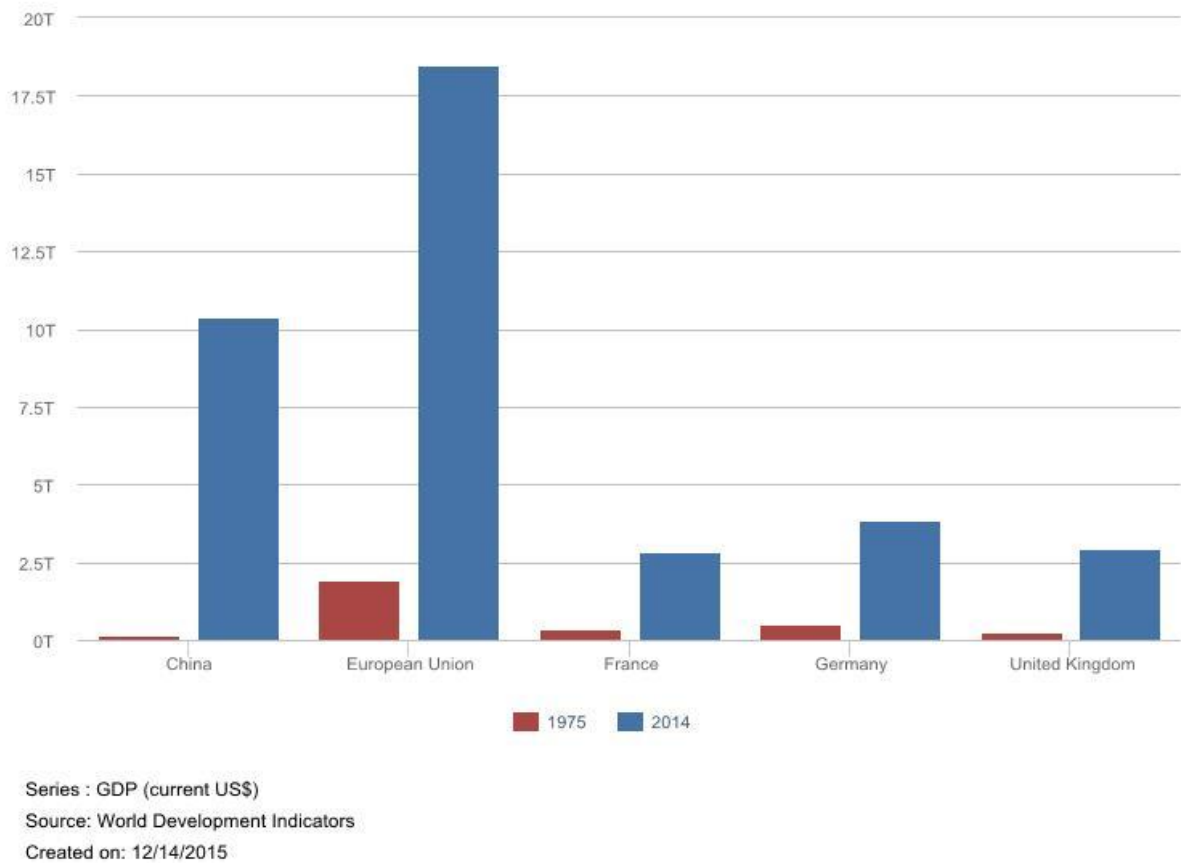
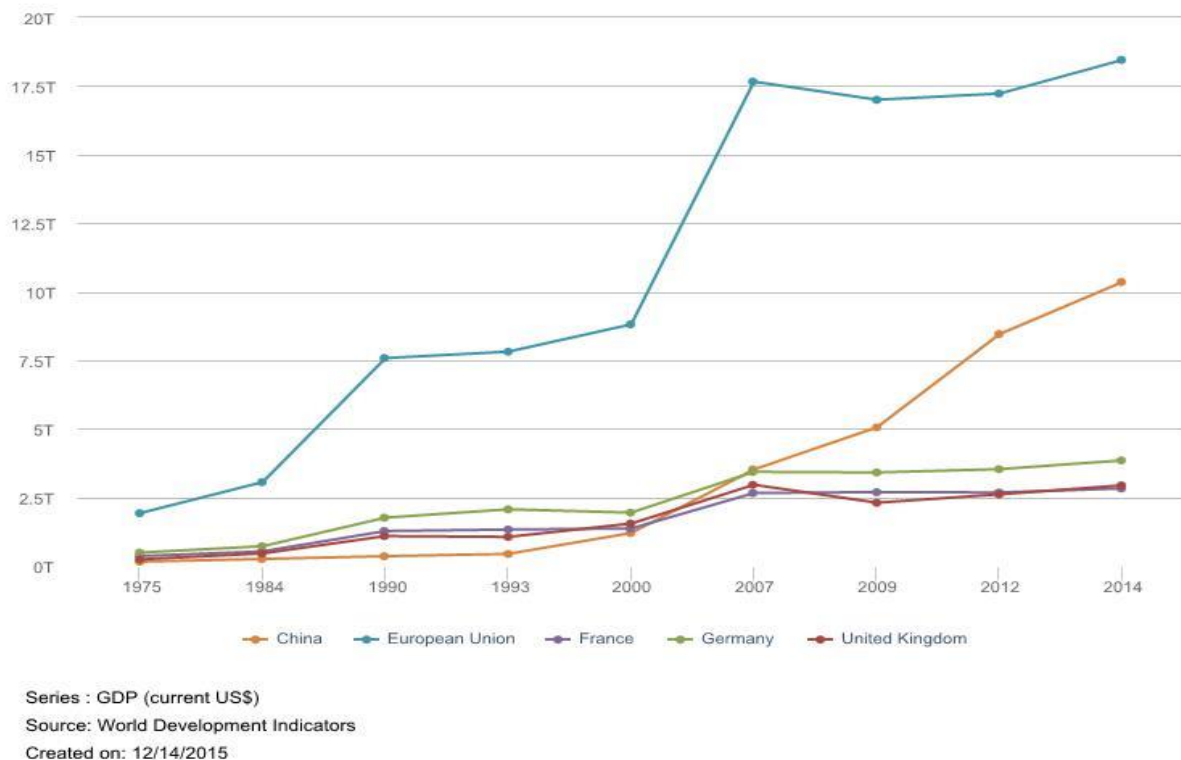


Figure 4 illustrates how each of these economies' GDP has changed since 1975, and the Figure 5 below illustrates the annual rate of the GDP growth over the same period. Since the economic reform policies were implemented in 1978, China's GDP has continued to increase; in 1984, the GDP growth rate peaked at 15.23%.

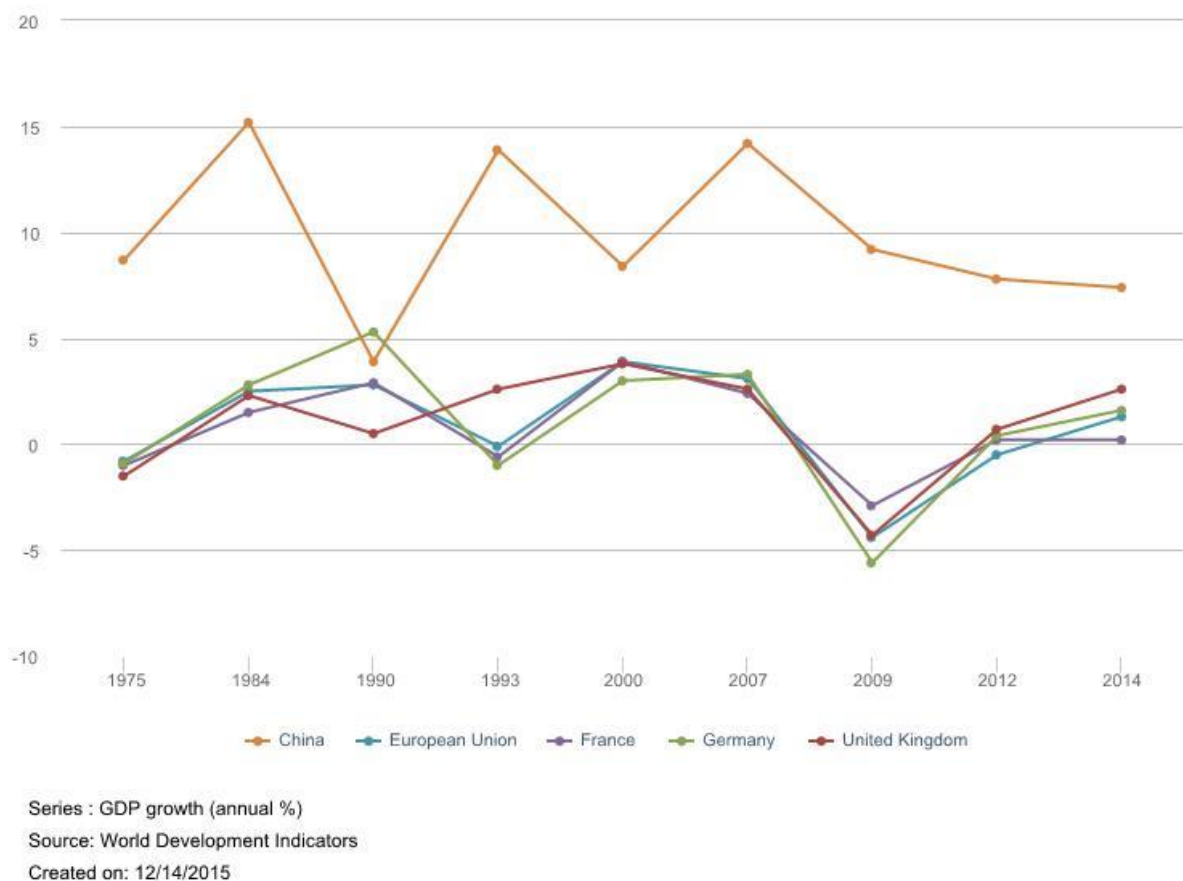
Figure 4. GDP of China, the EU and EU member states from 1975 to 2014



In 1990s, although the growth rate kept dropping, from 14.28% in 1992 to 7.62% in 1999, the GDP continued to increase. At the turn of the century, China almost caught up with France's GDP. Since its accession to the WTO in 2001, China has enjoyed a golden age, with a boom in its economy. The growth rate increased year by year from 2001 to 2007, peaking at 14.20% at 2007. Meanwhile, its GDP has climbed to 3.52 trillion US dollars, which has transcended Germany's 3.44 trillion to make China the third biggest economy in the world at that time. The global financial crisis has extended the GDP gap between China and the European countries. While the European economy was in recession, China's GDP continued to grow. China became the second largest economy in 2009, with the sheer size of China's GDP meaning that China shows a large amount of production, an active market, prosperous employment, an open investment environment, and that China has created a large amount of overall national wealth, which extricated China (as a whole) from its prior image as that of a poor country. Additionally, its success in terms of economic growth gives China greater confidence in dealing with other economies, no longer being perceived as a 'backward' country that needed economic aid from

the EU, but as a trade partner, a competitor, and even an investor, and consequently has been expected to take more responsibilities⁴¹⁸—a quite multifaceted country.

Figure 5. GDP growth of China, the EU and EU member states from 1975 to 2014



But China is more sophisticated than this, as the content above is purely what GDP tells us, but this is far from the whole story. It has been argued that GDP growth does not equate with progress,⁴¹⁹ and China studies scholars also indicate that GDP growth and development are

⁴¹⁸ Commission of the European Communities, “Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament—EU-China: Closing partners, growing responsibilities”, Brussels, 24.10.2006, COM(2006) 632 final.

⁴¹⁹ Costanza, Robert. Hart, Maureen. Posner, Stephen. and Talberth, John. “Beyond GDP: The Need for New Measures of Progress”, The Pardee Papers, No. 4, January 2009, available online at <http://www.bu.edu/pardee/files/documents/PP-004-GDP.pdf>, assessed 19 December 2015.

not the same thing, China's economic growth has been exaggerated, and many problems still exist beneath the myth of growth.⁴²⁰

It should be noted that a high GDP growth can be achieved by a country whose GDP was initially at a low level. China only had a GDP of 0.16 trillion US dollars in 1975, which means even an increase of 0.08 trillion represents a 50% growth rate in 1976 (in fact China's GDP decreased in 1976, as mentioned above, this example here is purely to illustrate that a relatively small absolute increase can result in a high growth rate). Therefore, China's rapid growth might be praiseworthy, but its effects should not be exaggerated, as this 'miracle' does not only showcase China's achievements, but also reminds us how poor China used to be. Furthermore, China's population needs to be taken into account in relations to its GDP. The huge population endows China with demographic dividend: large labour resources, low labour costs and a vast market size. Meanwhile, its shortcomings are obvious too—the quality of labour resources is relatively low, China's higher education and training index is ranked at only 68th in the world;⁴²¹ low labour cost advantage has attracted foreign investments, but also caused China's unbalanced dependence on exports from its manufacturing industry; despite its gigantic market size, China's domestic expenditure is not particularly active, as its gross domestic saving ranks first in the world, and its household expenditure level is relatively low.⁴²²

Moreover, the reason why the population is taken into account during this discussion is that despite the demographic dividend from the GDP boost, any figures that are divided across the large population number will become a small figure. GDP per capita is the point in case here. As an important index by which to measure the quality of an economy, GDP per capita shows that China might not be 'poor' at the national level as a country, but still 'poor' at the level of the citizenry. As illustrated in Figure 6, in both 1975 and 2014 China's GDP per capita is relatively low in contrast with the developed states in Europe. China's GDP per capita was 175.9 US dollars in 1975 (its size is negligible in the figure) and 7590 US dollars in 2014; the

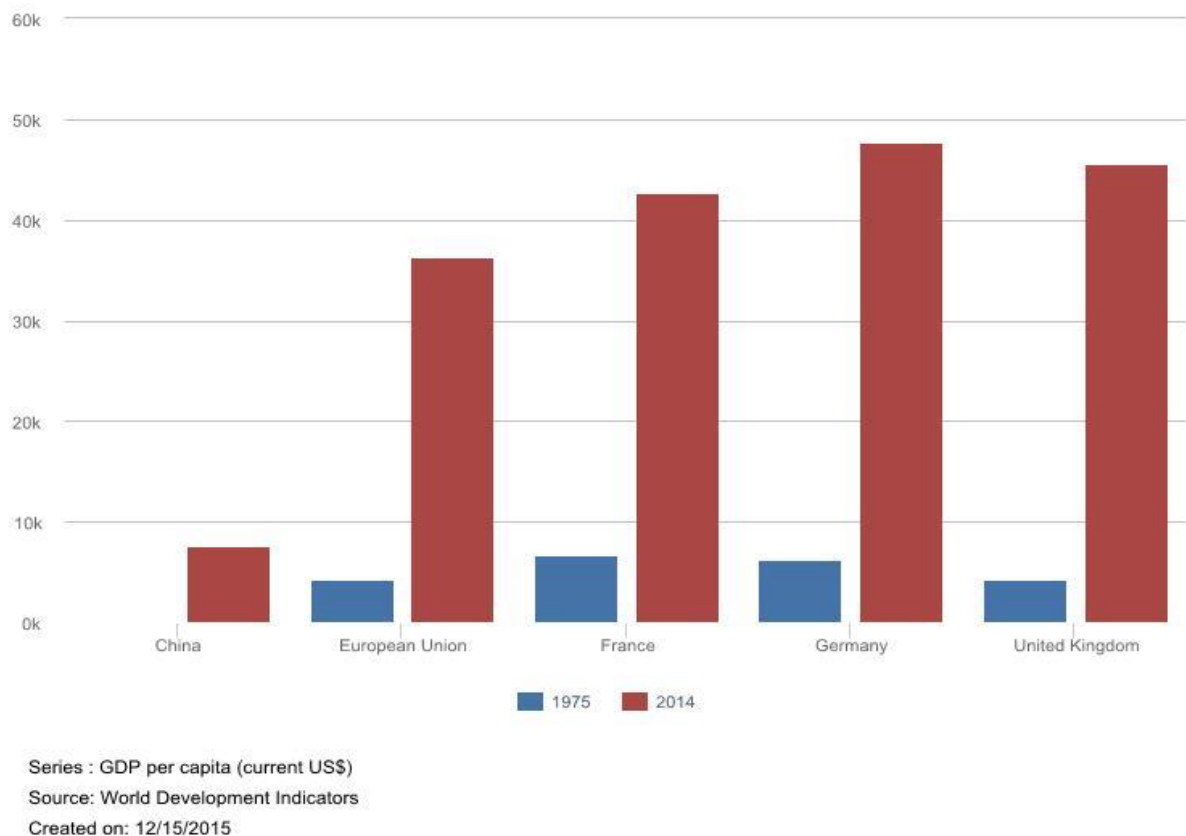
⁴²⁰ Shaun Breslin, "Why growth equals power - and why it shouldn't: Constructing Visions of China", *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 1, no. 1 (2008): 3-17.

⁴²¹ See World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016, the report on China is available at <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/economies/#economy=CHN>, assessed 19 December 2015

⁴²² Ibid.

growth is quite obvious, but still far behind the advanced states, or even behind many developing countries——China ranks 79th and lies below the world average line of 10721 US dollars. This is what the Atlas method illustrated, but the PPP method does not show any particularly significant difference; here, GDP per capita is 14956.7 international dollars, which still ranks 81st in the world.⁴²³ In terms of GDP per capita, China is not as rich as its GDP might suggest, the World Bank lists China as an upper-middle income country, but the gap between China and the European states, especially those high-income OECD members, is rather large.

Figure 6. GDP per capita of China, the EU and EU member states in 1975 and 2014



Despite the GDP scale, Chinese people's living standards remains at a comparatively low level worldwide. Poverty is a huge and long-term problem for China to tackle with. According to

⁴²³ All data from World Development Indicators, DataBank, the World Bank.

the World Bank's standard of \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP), China's poverty ratio is 11.2%, though the ratio would be 27.2% in terms of the \$3.10 a day standard, which means there are a large number of people in China who live below the world poverty line. What, then, would the situation be at China's national poverty line? China raised the line to 2300 yuan (rural per capita net income for one year) in 2011, which is 92.6% higher than the 1196 yuan line of 2009; this adjustment increased the proportion of the population living in poverty, but it should be noted that the 2300 yuan limit is still lower than the \$1.90 line. According to exchange rate in 2011(6.32), 2300 yuan equals 363.9 US dollars, so a Chinese citizen's daily income would thus be 0.99 US dollars, which is still lower than the World Bank line (it was \$1.25 a day at that time). This means that even though China raised its national poverty line, there is still a gap between its national line and the overall world line. China's 2014 statistical bulletin states that the population living in poverty in rural areas was 70.17 million⁴²⁴, but by the world standard, there should be more poor people than the government's own calculations.

What, then, is the exact number of the whole population living in poverty in both rural *and* urban areas? Here, the major task is not knowing the number, but understanding what it means. When the number is used for domestic propaganda, it uses the national line as its basis so the population living in poverty appears to be relatively low, and any such bulletin would emphasise the decreasing trend of poverty; when the audiences are foreign states or institutes, China then usually refers to the World Bank line and emphasises the large proportion of the population still living in poverty, in order to demonstrate that China is still a developing country.⁴²⁵

It is understandable that we should see the Chinese government playing this kind of double-faced propaganda. Lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty is indeed a magnificent achievement in terms of poverty alleviation, and the government does not only take this as an

⁴²⁴ National Bureau of Statistics of China, "See the Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2014 National Economic and Social Development", available on http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201502/t20150226_685799.html, assessed 20 December 2015.

⁴²⁵ See Premier Minister Li Keqiang's answer on the Press Conference for the Third Session of the 12th National People's Congress on http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2015-03/16/content_1930128.htm. To put "usually" is because emphasizing the poverty situation is not always the case, when it concerns with China's achievement on lifting the poverty, the standard usually is the national line.

economic success, but also the attainment of basic human rights as mentioned above. In other words, GDP growth and poverty alleviation have become one of the most significant sources of legitimacy for the CPC. On the other hand, China keeps reaffirming that it is still a developing country, its economic development is still at a primary stage and will likely remain so in the long term.⁴²⁶ There is no shame in discussing this at the international level, and to some extent, in fact, China can benefit from it: being a developing country means more benefits in trade and less responsibility in terms of environment protection.

It seems contradictory for a political leadership to disseminate its success whilst reaffirming its disadvantages, but this makes sense for China. When it comes to ‘growth’ (both in terms of economic development and poverty alleviation), China is successful, and this is where the government should gain international respect and domestic support; when it concerns ‘status’, China is never good enough, so the government can avoid carrying over-weighted international responsibilities whilst also inspiring the populace: now, things are not good enough, but (given the success in growth) there is always hope!

We can say that China’s own perception of its economy is complicated, but this kind of perception is just a reflection of the fact that China is indeed a complicated economy. Given the size of its GDP and market potential, it is a giant in the world economy, but a rather ‘skinny’ giant—its GDP per capita is low, its household income is below the world average, it has inequity in income, along with other problems like environment pollution, an unbalanced industrial structure and so forth, which cannot be fully discussed in a single section in this Chapter. China’s economy may be large, but not as strong as some might suggest, as it still has many domestic problems to deal with. This means that China is unable to take as much responsibility as international society expects. What China can do, as the former Chinese Premier said, is that ‘Managing China’s own business well is the biggest contribution to world development’.⁴²⁷ Nevertheless, China’s economic power cannot be overlooked, as it can still use it as a mean to attract others to build relationship and develop cooperation.

⁴²⁶ Hu Jintao, ‘Full text of Hu Jintao's report at 18th Party Congress’, Xinhua Net, 17 November 2012, the English version is available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/special/18cpcnc/2012-11/17/c_131981259.htm, assessed 22 December 2015.

⁴²⁷ See Wen Jiabao’s comment on <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/16178563.html>, and Li Keqiang’s comment on http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2015-03/16/content_1930128.htm, assessed 22 December 2015

4.3.4.2 The EU: a powerful economy

Taken as a whole, the EU it has the largest GDP in the world. As shown in Figure 3, the EU's GDP was 18.46 trillion US dollars in 2014, which accounted for 23.6% of world GDP. The remaining economies, such as the US, shared 22.1% of the world GDP in 2014, while China shared 13.3%, and Japan, 6.15%.⁴²⁸ In terms of its size, the EU is the biggest economy in the world.

In terms of GDP per capita, it is also one of the most developed economies worldwide. The EU's GDP per capita for 2014 was 36579.7 US dollars, though this figure might not be considered particularly spectacular because the enlargement of the EU lowered the average amount of its GDP per capita. However, this cannot disguise the fact that the EU consists of member states whose GDPs per capita is relatively high, especially in contrast to China. Many member states—for example, in 2014, Luxembourg (\$119172.7), Denmark (\$62425.5), Sweden (\$59180.2) and Ireland (\$55503.3)—were among the highest in the world.⁴²⁹ In terms of the Gross National Income, according to the World Bank's classification, 25 EU member states (except Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia) were listed as high-income countries in 2014.⁴³⁰

The EU is a significant trade power in the world. As illustrated in Figure 7, the EU was the largest exporter (\$3277.6 billion) and importer (\$3038.5 billion) of merchandise and commercial services, and its trade volume (\$6316.1 billion) was larger than any of the major powers (the US was \$5212.9 billion, China was \$4950.4 billion and Japan was \$1852.2 billion). In total, the EU accounted for 13.1% of total global trade.⁴³¹

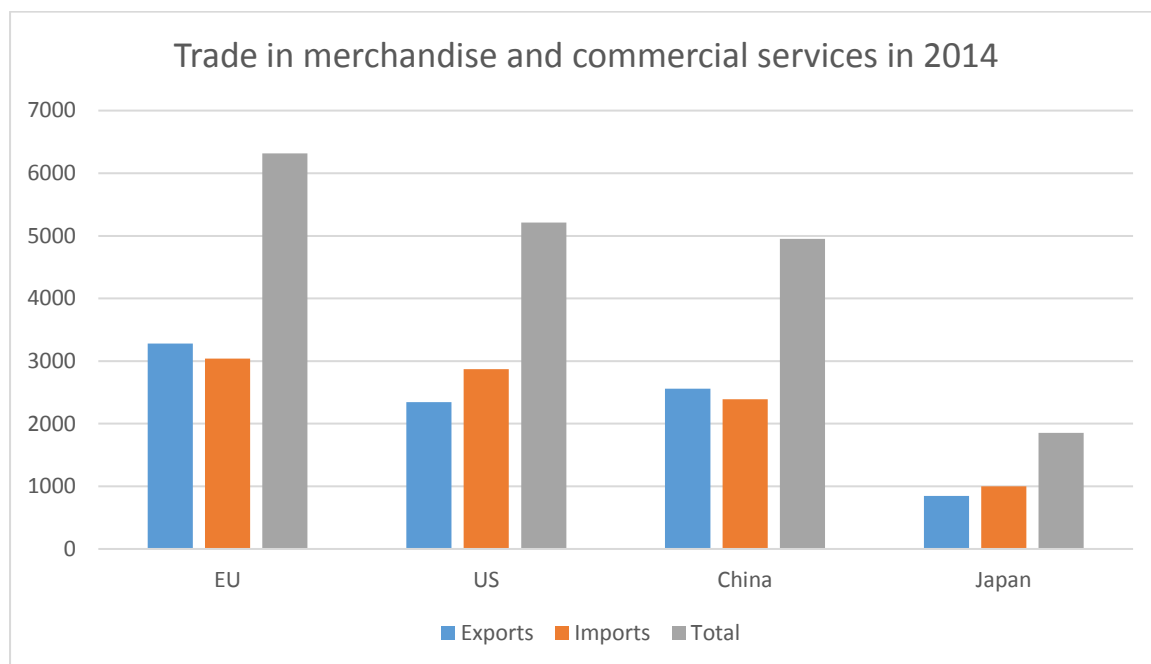
⁴²⁸ All data calculated via the World Development Indicators, DataBank, the World Bank.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ 'How are the income group thresholds determined?', The World Bank, available at <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/378833-how-are-the-income-group-thresholds-determined>, assessed 23 December 2015

⁴³¹ WTO Statistics Database. Own calculation.

Figure 7. Trade in merchandise and commercial services in 2014



Series: Trade volume (Billions of US dollars)

Source: WTO Statistics Database. Own calculation

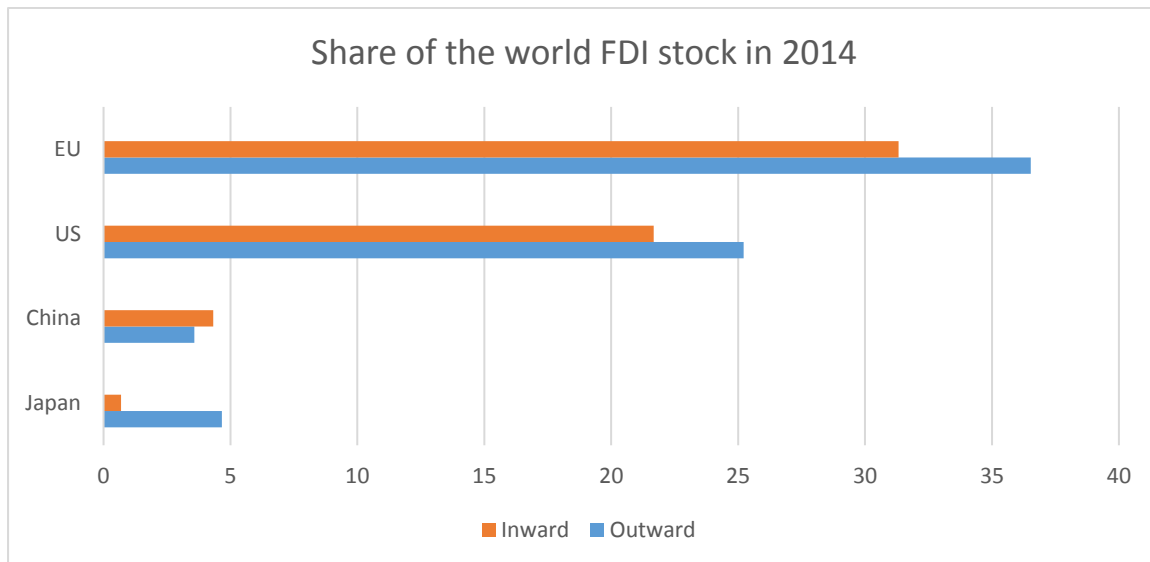
Furthermore, the EU is a major actor in global direct investments. As shown in Figure 8 below, The EU held 31.33% of the world's inbound investment stock, and 36.53% of the outbound stock. Whist the US accounted for 21.68% in inbound stock, and 25.22% in outbound stock, China accounted for only 4.32% and 3.58% respectively; Japan's figures were 0.68% and 4.67% respectively. Meanwhile, the EU was the most popular destination for international investments, as it had 19.38% of the world's inward investment flow, which was more than the US's 12.96% and China's 9.71%.⁴³²

Moreover, the EU has an influential presence in international organisations governing the world economy. For instance, the EU has been a member of the WTO since 1995, it works through the WTO to promote multilateral trade and resolve commercial disputes. The EU is also a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in which it sits alongside 22 other member states. Additionally, the EU is a member of the G20,

⁴³² This is not included in Figure 8, data accessed also from UNCTADstat, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

it is represented by the Commission and actively participates in Summits alongside its four member states (France, Germany, Italy and the UK).

Figure 8. Share of the world FDI stock in 2014



Series: shared percentage (%)

Sources: UNCTADstat, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

As a significant economy in the global arena, what the EU needs to do is to convert its economic capacity into economic power. As discussed in Chapter 1, in order to establish the legal and institutional basis for a convergent and consistent trade policy, the EU has implemented the Common Commercial Policy. Despite divergences and competition among institutions and member states, the CCP is still the EU's most integrated policy. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the EU has normative characteristics, which are also reflected in its commercial policy. Therefore, in order to pursue its normative goals, trade and other forms of economic cooperation are used by the EU as civilian means: they could be incentives for accepting the EU's norms, and could also be the punishment if a partner does not follow, or breaks, the rules.

The EU's economic strength has built a foundation to support its development policy. Based on the European Consensus on Development, the EU provides financial assistance and

economic cooperation to help developing countries eradicate poverty.⁴³³ Meanwhile, another major goal of this policy is to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the recipients.⁴³⁴ To some extent, the development aid is an instrument for diffusing the EU's norms. In order to receive the EU's assistance, a third-party country needs to accept the EU's norms. In this sense, democracy, human rights and other norms are not only the objectives, but also the requirements for the EU's development policies.⁴³⁵

As mentioned in section 4.3.3.2, the EU has implemented a series of development programmes with third parties. Observation shows that the EU has been successful in its development policy, especially in its cooperation with African countries, and so the EU is an ideal partner to promote the interests of developing countries.⁴³⁶ Others argue that there is a gap between expectation and outcome, which calls the effectiveness of the development policy into some doubt. This argument is also evident in the relationship between the EU and China. The EU started providing financial and technological assistance to China since 1984, whose programmes have covered a range of aspects, such as poverty eradication, economic and social reform, scientific and technological cooperation, and climate issues. The assistance was implemented as a part of the EU's constructive engagement policy with China.⁴³⁷ According to a Chinese government report, until the end of 2012, there have been 85 projects that were funded by 810 million euros.⁴³⁸ However, it has been criticized in that the constructive engagement underperformed as the progress in China was not sufficient to meet the EU's criteria.⁴³⁹ This exposed the limits

⁴³³ The European Consensus on Development, (2006/C 46/01), *Official Journal of the European Union*, 24.2.2006.

⁴³⁴ '3.2. 'Mainstreaming' the promotion of human rights and democracy in EC assistance programmes', European Commission. 2001a. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratisation in Third Countries (Brussels, 8 May 2001 COM(2001) 252 final).

⁴³⁵ Carlos Santiso, "Promoting democracy by conditioning aid? Towards a more effective EU development assistance," *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 3, (2002): 107-134; Richard Youngs, *Democracy Promotion: The Case of European Union Strategy*. (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2001).

⁴³⁶ Marjorie Lister, *The European Union and the South: Relations with developing countries* (London: Routledge, 2002), 6-41.

⁴³⁷ European Commission, 'A long term policy for China-Europe relations', Brussels, 5 July 1995, COM(1995) 279 final.

⁴³⁸ Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, 欧盟对华无偿援助简况 (Brief on the EU's assistance to China), Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, available at <http://gjs.mofcom.gov.cn/article/ar/as/201109/20110907733677.shtml>, assessed 6 January 2016.

⁴³⁹ John Fox and François Godement, *A Power Audit of EU-China Relations*, 32-37.

of the development policy when it faced the clash of values/cultures, as discussed in the last section.

Suspension of assistances can be used as a means to punish the recipients who violate the norms of democracy and human rights. For example, the EU has suspended its cooperation with Niger, Haiti, Fiji and other countries when their democracy was undermined.⁴⁴⁰ In 1989, the EC also suspended cooperation with China as a response to the Tiananmen event, and even though most cooperation was resumed over the following few years, the arms embargo remained in place. The Chinese government urged the EU to lift this but failed to convince. This will be further discussed in detail in chapter 6.

4.3.4.3 Summary

This section has demonstrated the EU's and China's particular characteristics in terms of their economies. Despite the rapid economic growth and remarkable achievement in development, the Chinese government still perceives China to be a developing country. It emphasises that certain domestic problems remain to be solved, and believes that resolving domestic issues has priority over taking over-weighted international responsibilities. This kind of perception affected its attitude towards assisting the EU in tackling the European debt crisis, as will be seen in section 5.3.5.

The EU is a significant economic presence in the international arena. It is capable of wielding its economic power as a civilian means to serve its other initiatives such as promoting certain norms. As mentioned in the previous sections, the EU is a normative power, and given its post-modernist values, it not only enjoys the responsibility of spreading its norms across national borders, it also takes it as a way in which to realise its normative interests. However, its ambitions need to be built on the foundation of its economic strength; in other words, its economic clout empowers the EU in the pursuit of its normative interests.

⁴⁴⁰ Carlos Santiso, "Promoting democracy by conditioning aid? Towards a more effective EU development assistance," *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 3, (2002): 107-134

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the type identities of the EU and China. Type identity is generated by self-understanding and inner-construction, and reflects the intrinsic characteristics of the actor. These characteristics are attached to cultural elements, which explains the question of ‘what kind of actors are they’ in international society. Specifically, type identity has three functions in explaining actors’ behaviours. First, it socializes actors into certain categories in international society, and in the process of socialisation, actors follow corresponding norms and display relevant behaviour patterns. Second, type identity defines actors’ interests. Their genuine interests are shaped by actors’ cognition of their inner qualities, which are the values, norms and preferences that compose the contents of the type identity. Third, type identity does not only influence the process of self-cognition, but also the perception of others. Perceiving others is an inter-subjective process, thus the perception of others is attached to actors’ subjective values, which conform to the type identity and relevant characteristics. That being said, this chapter has explored the type identities of the EU and China from the perspectives of political regimes, strategies, values and economies, as they can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the properties of the two actors.

In terms of the political regimes, China has adopted a model of democratic centralism under the leadership of the CPC. Instead of debating the criticisms of this single party system, this section focused on China’s self-understanding of its ‘democracy’. This self-understanding shows that China, or specifically the CPC, believes that its regime is legitimately democratic, and it refuses the paradigm of other regimes (particularly Western multi-party democracy) that might undermine the leadership of the CPC. These ideas are considerably different from Western norms, and present a huge obstacle to the political identification between the two sides. Furthermore, it is one of the major areas where the EU wants to see the transition occur. In another way, the EU also faces the ‘democratic deficit’, and it reflects the complexity of the EU’s sources of initiative. In tackling this issue, it has gradually gained democratic legitimacy at the EU level. However, its supranational quality gives the EU a complicated policy-making procedure (as discussed in chapter 1), thus, it is not as efficient as nation states in constructing a coherent policy.

From a strategic perspective, China is a rising power, which means that China does not only pursue material interests to strengthen its hard power, but also seeks to adapt international norms into the shapes that it favours. This might cause the clash with the EU as it is a normative power that defends the norms that have been built by the West. But in the analysis, it is noted that while the EU emphasises its normative principles, it also has realistic needs, which are those of pursuing material interests. Therefore, it is possible for the two to cooperate. But, in their cooperation, it is important to distinguish which are material needs and which are normative interests.

With regards to values, China is an Eastern culture with Westphalian norms. It has its own civilization and understanding of international norms, such as those associated with human rights. Moreover, in order to defend its sovereignty and exclude interference from others, it upholds the nationalist ideals that were developed from Westphalian treaties. In contrast, the EU sees human rights differently, and given its post-modern understanding of the notion of sovereignty, it believes it is legitimate to intervene in a third-party country's domestic politics in order to protect human rights and promote democracy. Consequently, this is an aspect where the EU clashes with China.

Economically, China is a fast-growing country, where the amount and the growth rate of the GDP shows how impressive China's economic development has been. However, the GDP per capita indicates that China remains a developing country that still faces a number of domestic problems, and this results in the fact that China is not willing to carry too many international responsibilities, for example, dealing with climate issues and the euro crisis. The EU is the largest economy in the world, and a developed bloc. Its economic strength enables it to implement its development policy, which is to promote economic development and spread democracy and human rights in developing countries. This development policy has also been applied in the engagement with China, but was not as successful as the EU had otherwise expected; this will be further discussed in the next Chapter.

The exploration of type identities has shown the inner characteristics of the two. Some of them have similarities; for example, in terms of strategies, they both pursue material and normative

interests. But, in the meantime, they have many differences, especially in their understandings of norms such as human rights and democracy. Therefore, their pursuit of normative interests will not have the same dimension, and may even clash with each other. In some regards, the two entities' characteristics are not directly related or contradictory, but along with qualities in other aspects, they can still explain the preferences and behaviour patterns of these two actors. For example, China's political regime is supported by its own values, and its legitimacy has been reinforced by its economic success. The EU's normative interests partly originate from its values, and are supported by its economic powers. Moreover, the EU itself is a multifaceted actor with multiple interest channels, so it needs to be cautious when analysing where the EU's interest is coming from.

The analysis of the type identity has contributed to an understanding of the actors' characteristics, preferences and behaviour patterns. Based on these understandings, it will also contribute to an explanation as to how the two construct their role identities, and particularly *why* they perceive each other in a particular way. The quality of an actor's type identity is critical in shaping its perception of others, because the actor's ability to know (in this thesis, perceive) is based on its inner characteristics, which constitute its type identities. The two actors' perceptions are significant factors that will be analysed in the following chapters, as it impacts the nature of their role identities and their interactions in the negotiation on arms embargo. The demonstration of these two actors' type identity in chapter will contribute to explain why they perceive each other in a particular way, and thereby, construct their role identities.

Chapter 5. Role identities of the EU and China: Relations in Five Phases

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the EU's and China's crucial inner characteristics, on which they have built their type identities as members of international society. This chapter focuses on role identity, which refers to a pair of roles that are constructed in the interaction between two (or multiple) actors. It explains the actors' perceptions of each other, and defines their needs from each other, thereby, shapes the nature of their relationship.

This chapter begins with an introduction into the concept of 'role identity', and then establishes two key elements that can influence the construction of role identity: the external environment and perceptions. Furthermore, these two key elements' relationship to more conventional theories of roles, perceptions and images, such as the role theory and image theory in Foreign Policy Analysis will be clarified respectively in sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.3. Additionally, section 5.2.3 will discuss the concept and function of 'shared knowledge', and further clarify its links to concepts of perception and social learning.

This chapter will then follow with a historical review, which covers nearly 40 years since 1975 when the EU-China bilateral relationship was established. Building on different role identities, I have divided this period into five phases; in 1975-1989, the EU perceived China as a primary actor in international society, and itself as 'new partner' of China. In 1989-1994, China was perceived as a conservative Communist country, and the EU played a role of 'punisher'. Between 1995-2005, they were 'maturing partners'. From 2006-2008, the relationship was further complicated, and their identities could be defined as 'critical friends'. Between 2008-2012, in the wake of the global financial crisis, the two parties became 'reluctant partners', and behaved in a pragmatic way. In reviewing the historical development, there seems to be a regular pattern: the relationship started well in the first phase, but then was affected by tensions in the second; the ties were tight in the third phase, but then became strained again in the next phase. However, I do not suggest a cycle in the transition of relationship that inevitably leads from closeness to tension and then back to closeness again (and then to tension and so on). The

only salient factor is the transformation of role identities, as the qualities of the relationship are not observed as given, but rather reflect the nature of the role identities and the extent of their shared knowledge, which will be further discussed in section 5.2.

In the historical review section, I will first demonstrate the context of that phase in order to introduce the external environment and its impact on the construction of identity. Then follows the section on ‘role identities’ and ‘corresponding interactions’, where the former section will explore their role identities and the relevant interests, and the latter will show the corresponding interactions that can be attributed to the identities and interests. In the process of this review, official documents and significant affairs will be taken as crucial factors by which to measure the changes over the several stages mentioned above. This review as a whole can be considered as a long-term based case study that tests my main hypothesis, namely that role identity plays a decisive role in influencing the EU-China relationship.

5.2. Role Identity

Before reviewing the historical process, it is necessary to clarify the concept of ‘role identity’. This section aims to a) define ‘role identity’ on the basis of constructivist theory, and explain its relationship with roles and images of conventional theories; b) to demonstrate its application in the analysis of EU-China relations; and c) to apply the notion of ‘perception’ to analyse the conceptual interaction between actors, to connect role identity with type identity and the external environment, and to clarify the links between ‘shared knowledge’ and ‘social learning’. This discussion of role identity is designed to give a theoretical framework to the historical review.

5.2.1 Definition of role identity

Role identity represents a mutual relationship that is generated in social interactions. In the last chapter, I explained the nature of type identity, which represents the intrinsic characteristics and answers the question ‘*what* am I’. Role identity, however, is constructed in the engagement with others, and answers the question of ‘*who* am I’. Specifically, when two actors engage with each other, they construct a pair of roles. This pair of roles frames their relationship, and

outlines their perceptions towards each other, which in turn then define the needs each party has from the other, and also sketches a behavioural pattern that conforms to these needs.

‘Role’, ‘identity’ and ‘Role identity’ are widely used concepts in various disciplines, not only in IR Constructivism, but also in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), Social Psychology, and so forth. In the context of Social Psychology, ‘role identity’ is a consequence of ‘self-conceptualization’ and an orientation of ‘role performance’. ‘Self-conceptualization’, depends on different theories and context, could be self-categorization or identification.⁴⁴¹ Nevertheless, altogether, its purpose is to recognise the concept of ‘self’, which reflects both social structure and individual personalities as a whole.⁴⁴² ‘Role performance’ studies how one’s behaviour is affected by the expectations of ‘others’ and the properties that are attached to the ‘self’.⁴⁴³ Social psychologists have provided an analytical model that can recognize one’s role salience, by which they can then analyse one’s behaviour.

This model has been employed by FPA scholars within the framework of ‘role theory’, which is designed to analyse national role or state identity and its effect on foreign policy.⁴⁴⁴ While being applied both by Foreign Policy analysts and constructivists, role theory in FPA differs from identity in Constructivism. Role theorists emphasise at the national level with a cognitive approach, whilst Constructivists take a systematic perspective with an agent-structure approach.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴¹ Jan E. Stets and Peter Burke, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory”, *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no.3 (2000): 224-237.

⁴⁴² George Herbert Mead, “Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviorist (Works of George Herbert Mead, Vol. 1),” (1967), 162.

⁴⁴³ Sheldon Stryker, “Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research”, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 30, no.4 (1968): 558-564; Sheldon Stryker, “Toward an Adequate Social Psychology of the Self”, *Contemporary Sociology* 9, no.3 (1980): 383-385; Peter Burke and Donald C.Reitzes, “The Link between Identity and Role Performance”, *Social Psychology Quarterly* 44, no.2 (1981): 83-92.

⁴⁴⁴ Kalevi J. Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy”, *International Studies Quarterly*, 14, no. 3 (1970): 233-309; Stephen G. Walker, eds., *Role theory and foreign policy analysis*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); Naomi Bailin Wish, “Foreign Policy Makers and Their National Role Conceptions”, *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1980): 532-554.

⁴⁴⁵ Cameron G Thies, “Integrating Foreign Policy Analysis and International Relations through Role Theory”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, no. 1 (2012): 1-4.

This has resulted in a gap between these two disciplines. Wendt criticised the role theorists' assumption that 'states' foreign policy roles are entirely a function of policy makers' beliefs and domestic politics, rather than their relations to Others.⁴⁴⁶ On the other hand, Banchoff made the accusation that Constructivists have yet to develop 'an explanatory framework applicable to a wide range of cases', and their neglect of national level politics makes them incapable of analysing national actions.⁴⁴⁷

To be fair, Wendt is not truly correct. In Holsti's article, the author did not 'entirely' give credit to individuals' beliefs and domestic politics, but also acknowledged the influence of alter's⁴⁴⁸ prescriptions, which have their origin in system, structure and world opinion. What Holsti argued is that in the policy-making process, there is a primacy of influence of self-conceptions and domestic needs over alter's prescriptions. The externally constructed norms usually give way to internally generated needs.⁴⁴⁹

It is true that external influence needs to be internalised by the actor's perception, and in this sense the FPA cognitive approach is valid. But there are two points that should be noted, and these points are important in understanding the differences between the constructivist approach and conventional theories. First, domestic needs are not given by nature, but constructed both domestically and internationally. To some extent, the international environment could have a significant impact on the construction of domestic needs. This is where the constructivist approach is different from the FPA approach, instead of taking any interests as given, it asks how these interests are constructed.⁴⁵⁰ Second, how does one actor perceive the world, and how it internalises external influences into its own conception should be questioned. In a socialized environment, one's conception could be affected by others or the whole culture of the environment, and therefore its perception of the world might be pre-influenced by the world at

⁴⁴⁶ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 227.

⁴⁴⁷ Thomas Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration". *European Journal of International Relations*, 5, no. 3 (1999): 259-289.

⁴⁴⁸ Here "alter" has an analogous meaning as "other", it can also refer to external elements in the text. It was written in this way in Holsti's work, see Kalevi J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy", *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1970): 233-309.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Andrew Cortell and James Davis, "How do international institutions matter? The domestic impact of international rules and norms," *International Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (1996): 451-478.

the first place. This shows another distinctive feature of the constructivist approach. It has an inter-subjective way in analysing relations between agents and the structure. In terms of this, constructivists proposed three cultures of anarchy, that an agent/actor could have specific behaviour/perception modes in different cultures of anarchy;⁴⁵¹ this will be explained below in section 5.2.2.1.

Some scholars argue that the gap between IR and FPA is not that great, and it is possible that it can be synthesized.⁴⁵² There is also an increasing number of researchers who have tried to close the gap and applied role theory in various cases.⁴⁵³ Within these literatures, ‘role’ is categorized as ‘role-conception’ and ‘role-expectation’, where the former refers to the self-conceptualization process, which distinguishes the self from others, and the latter refers to the influence from others. This categorization, to some extent, conforms to the constructivist definition of ‘identity’. Within the concept of identity, type identity could be considered as a process of ‘self-conception’, which reflects the inner characteristics of the ‘self’, while role identity refers to the relationship with others and the position in the structural society. However, Constructivists do not pay sufficient attention to the analysis of how external factors can influence an actor’s conception and behaviour, which means the connection between type identity and role identity is absent, which is also the point that role theorists criticised.

With the awareness of both theories’ limits, this chapter aims to close the gap by demonstrating how type identity shapes the way that the parties perceive each other, and it will also show how the actors’ behaviours are decisively influenced by the combination of type identity and role identity. The type identity outlines the actors’ general behavioural modes, and the role identity

⁴⁵¹ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 246-312.

⁴⁵² Juliet Kaarbo, “Foreign Policy Analysis in the Twenty-First Century: Back to Comparison, Forward to Identity and Ideas”, *International Studies Review* 5, no. 2 (2003): 156-202; Cameron G. Thies, “Integrating Foreign Policy Analysis and International Relations through Role Theory”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, no. 1 (2012): 1-4.

⁴⁵³ For example, Glenn Chafetz, Hillel Abramson, and Suzette Grillot, “Role Theory and Foreign Policy: Belarussian and Ukrainian Compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime”, *Political Psychology* 17, no.4 (1996): 727-757; Michael Grossman, “Role Theory and Foreign Policy Change: The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s”, *International Politics* 42, no. 3 (2005): 334-351; Chih-yu Shih, “Assigning Role Characteristics to China: The Role State Versus The Ego State”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, no. 1 (2012): 71-91; Rikard Bengtsson and Ole Elgström, “Conflicting Role Conceptions? The European Union in Global Politics”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, no. 1 (2012): 93-108.

determines their actions in specific situations. The function of type identity is seen as a factor here, but the main theme of this chapter is to explore the role identities of the EU and China.

5.2.2 Function of role identity

This section aims to explain the impact of the external environment on the construction of identity, the relationships between identity, interest and behaviour, and the function of perception in the 'identity-interest-behaviour' relationship. This section, meanwhile, also establishes the analytical structure of this thesis.

5.2.2.1 External environment

As mentioned above, role theorists believe that alter' prescriptions, such as 'international legal norms or world opinion explain few aspects of national behaviour'. Because of the 'fact of sovereignty' and the structure of anarchy, those prescriptions are too 'weak compared to those that exist in an integrated society and particularly with formal organisations'.⁴⁵⁴ However, this is not entirely true. First, as Wendt argues, 'anarchy is what states make of it'⁴⁵⁵, the recognition of sovereignty itself has made 'sovereignty' a 'world norm', and thus, as argued above, the needs within the confine of sovereignty have actually been pre-influenced by world opinion in the first place.

Second, the initiatives of domestic needs are strong indeed, but this is not because international society is 'flexible' or not as 'integrated' as a formal organisation⁴⁵⁶. Even within an integrated organisation, it is also common to see member states prioritizing their domestic initiatives over the EU's norms. If we follow sociological role theory back to the societal level, again it is common to see individuals thinking of their own interests first. Thus the degree of flexibility or integration is not the crucial factor with which to judge the efficacy of the external environment. Moreover, we cannot deny the fact that the external environment has the power to influence individuals, organisations, or sovereign states, especially in the modern global agenda. Cooperation in peace-keeping, combating transnational crime and coping with climate

⁴⁵⁴ Kalevi J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy", p.243.

⁴⁵⁵ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", 391-425.

⁴⁵⁶ Kalevi J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy", 243.

change shows that there are common international opinions to share and common norms to conform to, even though some of them might undermine the sovereignty of states.

Then how does the external environment influence role identity and thereby behaviour? Wendt proposed three cultures of anarchy—Hobbesian culture, Lockean culture and Kantian culture—to explain the role identities of states in international society.⁴⁵⁷ In Hobbesian culture, the dominant logic is ‘kill or be killed’, and such a violent environment constitutes an ‘enmity’ role relationship, where actors are each other’s enemies. In Lockean culture, the dominant logic has been replaced by ‘live and let live’, state sovereignty has been recognised and the rights of ‘life and liberty’ have been acknowledged. In this environment, ‘rivalry’ is the character of the role relationship. Rivals allow others to live but still compete with each other, and if it comes to conflict, force is used with limits and constraints. Wendt believes international politics lives in the Lockean culture in the post-Westphalian era. Kantian culture is based on the logic of ‘pluralistic security communities and collective security’. ‘Friendship’ represents the relationship in this environment, which is constituted by two rules of ‘non-violence’ and ‘team play’. Wendt noticed this phenomenon in the operation of NATO, and nowadays the EU could be regarded as another model.

Constructivists do not agree with structural-realists’ argument that international structure determines the allocation of powers, and thereby determines the function of states. The nature of the structure comes with certain cultural elements attached, which is based on states’ shared knowledge. And this shared knowledge, in turn, helps states internalise exogenous cultures and construct their role identities. It should be noted that the three cultures above are the examples that have been summarised by Wendt, but there could be ‘middle place’ between the three, in which the cultural atmosphere is in a mixed status which is compounded by two of those cultures. For instance, the external environment could be harsh, hence global culture would be somewhat between Hobbesian and Lockean culture, or even slightly lean towards Hobbesian culture. Therefore, the culture of the external environment is more diverse than only these three ideal types would suggest. The function of external environment is important in the sense that

⁴⁵⁷ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 246-312.

it helps in understanding how EU-China relations change along with the atmosphere of international society. This will be explicitly demonstrated in the first three sections of 5.3.

5.2.2.2 Identity-Interest-behaviour

Neorealists believe that in the anarchic world, states are egocentric. The behaviours of states are directed by interests which are shaped by the distribution of powers⁴⁵⁸. In this condition, national interests have a material basis, and their behaviours are a mixed result of anarchy and material interests. This argument overemphasises the function of the material, whilst neglecting that of ideas. Constructivists argue that identity is the prerequisite of interests, without which interests cannot be constituted.

When we look at the relationships between identity, interest and behaviour, they are concerned with three primary questions: ‘who am I’, ‘what do I want?’ and ‘what should I do?’ Identity represents the properties and international roles of the actor, which answers the question of ‘who am I?’ Interest explains the actor’s needs, while it also consists of the motivations to realise identity, and therefore this answers the question of ‘what do I want?’ Behaviour refers to the policies and the actions required to implement the policies that are projected for interests, and it answers the question of ‘what can I do?’ Based on these concepts, the logic is that an actor 1) conceptualizes who it is (understanding the identity), 2) then it can know what it needs (shaping the interest), finally 3) it can decide what to do (conducting the behaviour). Consequently, if we say behaviour is motivated by interest, more precisely it is the interest that has been realised—the interest in the scope defined by identity. We can try to understand this at two levels. At the micro level, the actor, for instance, a country, is a ‘group-self’, every ‘self’ within the actor, which for example, could be the local government within the country, has its own identity, thereby having its own interest. But not all the interests can be included within the actor’s interests. It is only if the actor conceptualizes the identity of certain groups of ‘self’, then the interests of these ‘selves’ can become the actor’s interests. At the macro level, the actor may have various identities in international society, but not all of them can be internalised by the actor, who will need to internalise these identities first and can then shape its international interests so as to match with its identities.

⁴⁵⁸ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of international politics*, 126.

National role identities are various and variable, and may change in the interaction with others. Similarly, the relations of identity, interest and behaviour are also dynamic⁴⁵⁹. When the actor's identity changes, its belief as to what it needs varies accordingly, hence the behaviour model will be different. It should be noted that interest—as the link between identity and behaviour—does not merely refer to material interests such as commercial profit or military power, but also to normative interests like the willingness to promote democracy, human rights or a new model of great power relations. Furthermore, although 'interest' is used as a functional factor in this research, it does not mean that the dimension of this research is interest-oriented. 'Interest' is not the exclusive factor of realism, rather, the crucial question is how 'interest' is constructed.⁴⁶⁰

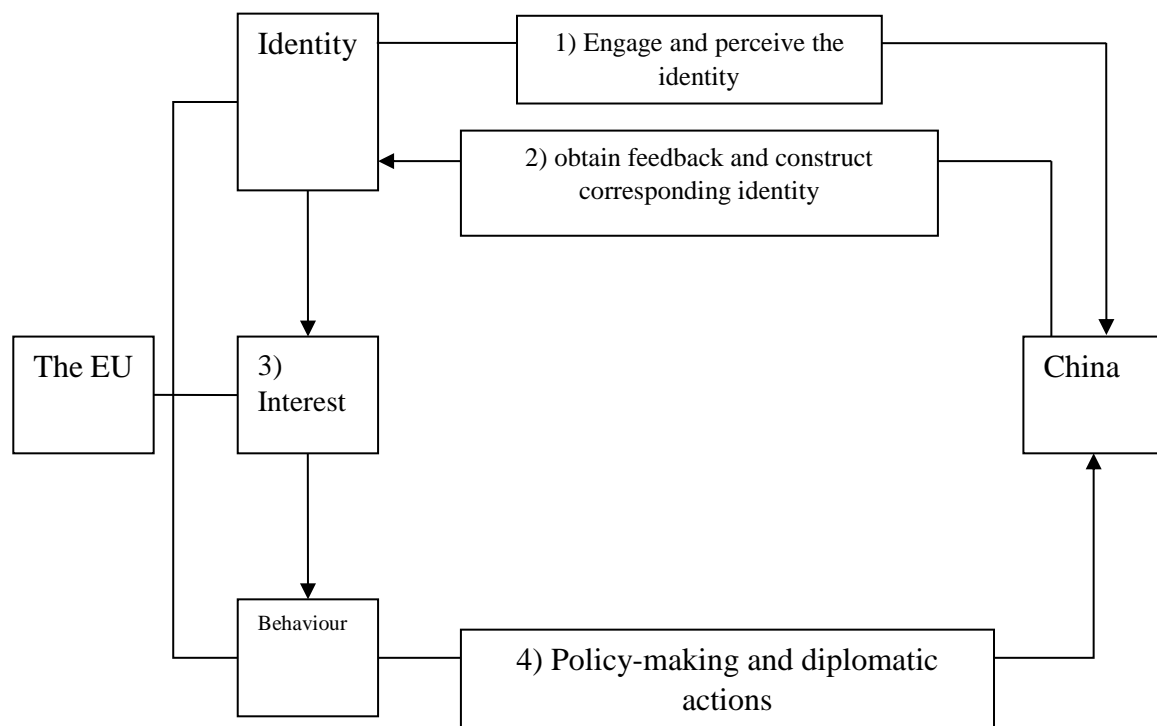
Following from the discussion above, a question arises. It seems that the subject of the relations of identity, interest and action is one single actor—one actor constructs its identity, shapes its interest and then conducts its behaviour. Then how can an analytical model fit into the interaction between two actors, namely, the EU and China? How can a connection be established between the two actors?

If an actor has a role identity, it is because there is a kind of identity of 'other' that exists. In the process of an interaction the two actors have their own identities, and both can perceive the identity of the others, and the perceived identity can generate feedback and construct a corresponding identity. In the process of shaping interest and behaviour, the actor's identity is connected with the other's role identity, but is also branded with its own characteristics. The pattern of this relationship is shown below:

⁴⁵⁹ Peter Katzenstein, (eds.). *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, 61.

⁴⁶⁰ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 144.

Figure 9. The relationships of identity, interest and behaviour in the interaction



In this figure, if we take the EU as the subject and China as the object, then 1) the EU engages with China and perceives China's national identity, 2) the EU obtains feedback and constructs its corresponding identity, 3) the EU defines its interest towards China, and 4) the EU makes policy and practices diplomatic action with China.

5.2.3 Perceptions

As might be noticed in the discussion above, there is a hidden but critical factor in the self and external environment relationship and the identity-interest-behaviour framework—it is that of perception. Perception affects the way in which the external environment is internalised, and it also functions in the process of 'constructing corresponding identity', and influences the way in which the other's role identity is perceived. This point requires further discussion.

Perception is a concept initially applied in Image theory in FPA. Image theorists argue that ‘it is what we think the world is like, not what it is really like, that determines our behaviour’.⁴⁶¹ The world has an objective existence, but is revealed in a subjective image as we perceive it, where our perception reflects the ‘patterns or configurations of...the out-group’⁴⁶², and this perception will be reflected in our behaviour. In this sense, Image theory takes a similar cognitive approach to the constructivist approach, as they both emphasise subjectivity. Another similarity between Image theory and the constructivist approach is that they both believe that perceiving others is not always a process of revealing ‘fact’. At the societal level, due to the early (family, primary, and so forth) education and historical traditions that have been implanted into the culture, one’s perception of the world could be ‘a perspective distortion of the truth’⁴⁶³. At the international level, it is reasonable to draw an analogy. Due to the diverse characteristics of nations — political regimes, material powers, cultures, historical experiences, geopolitical conditions and so on — their perceptions of the world could be different. For instance, North Korea and Sweden will each feel a different level of hostility from the outside world, and they might have different understandings of the world’s atmosphere.

With that said, the constructivist approach applied in this thesis is somehow different from the Image theory. Despite their acknowledgement on subjectivity, role identity explicitly emphasises the inter-subjectivity. It does not only explore one actor’s perception of the other, but also asks how one’s perception shapes the formation of the other’s perception. Moreover, role identity goes further to study that, to what extent would their perceptions be compliant to each other, thereby shaping the nature of the relationship. This feature of the role identity involves the concept of ‘shared knowledge’, which will be discussed below. Similarly, it is not guaranteed that the perceptions among international actors reflect each other’s true characteristics. In fact, due to the existence of sovereignty and the necessary concerns of national security, there could be many ‘blind spots’, which prevent one nation from clearly understanding another’s intentions, motivations, strategies and requirements, and consequently leave them to guess and indulge in game playing, and thereby leading to misunderstandings.

⁴⁶¹ Kenneth E. Boulding, “National Images and International Systems”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 3, no. 2 (1959): 120-131.

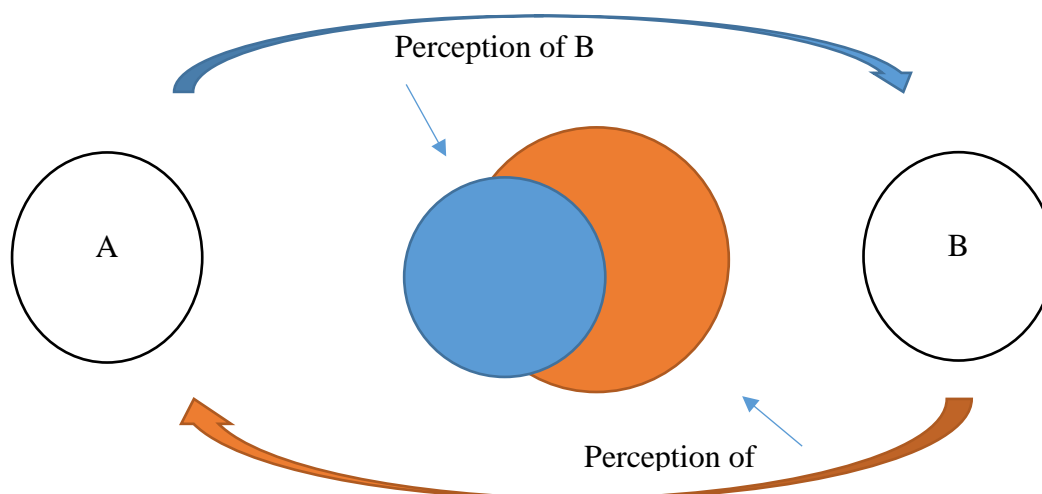
⁴⁶² Michele G. Alexander, Marilynn B. Brewer and Robert W. Livingston, “Putting stereotype content in context: Image theory and interethnic stereotypes”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 31, no. 6 (2005): 781-794.

⁴⁶³ Kenneth E. Boulding, “National Images and International Systems”, 122.

Due to these potential misunderstandings and different characteristics, role identity could be asymmetrical in the process of construction. For instance, if one side mistakenly takes the other as a friend, but the other side does not have a similar impression and thus remains as a rival (or even worse an enemy), then this asymmetrical structure of role identities could lead to disappointments, conflicts or in a worst-case scenario, even wars.

These misunderstandings and asymmetries attribute to the lack of *shared knowledge*, which has its origins in perceptions of each other and the external environment. In the process of perceiving each other, as shown in Figure 10, A and B would generate their own perceptions, and the overlapping section is their shared knowledge. This shared knowledge consists of the two actors' perceptions, ideas and preferences, which generate motivations for actors to perform interactions that benefit both of them. Moreover, sharing common knowledge implies that actors have similar behavioural norms, and this kind of conformities contributes to maintain the nature of the relationship. Therefore, the more shared knowledge they have, the less asymmetrical the role identities, and the more solid the relationship can be. If the shared knowledge breaks, then the relationship would become unstable and the cooperation would be undermined.

Figure 10. Perception and shared knowledge



This figure is produced by the author.

Then what is the source of the perceptions? The answer is type identity. Just like education and cultural traditions impact individual's perception of society, these inner characteristics influence ways of thinking. Perception is based on the actor's knowledge and their capability to know. Thus, the result of perceiving is inevitably attached to the actor's own knowledge and conceptions, which reflect its inner characteristics. In the processes 1) and 2) in Figure 9, if the way of perceiving is affected, then the content of China's identity would be attached to the EU's own knowledge, and the corresponding identity would actually correspond to the 'perceived identity'—China's objective identity is the 'raw material', and will be processed in the EU's 'mind factory'.

The way they perceive each other involves a concept of 'social learning'. It suggests that one actor engages others with fragmentary knowledge and provisional perceptions. Through the process of engagement, the actor obtains updated information and thus adapts its strategies towards the others.⁴⁶⁴ Whilst social learning provides an excellent approach in explaining actors' interactions and their compliance with international norms,⁴⁶⁵ it is argued that it sometimes takes a rationalistic stance: a) it assumes that the actor naturally accepts the international norms as given,⁴⁶⁶ and b) it assumes that the actor is capable of fully understanding the information it acquired through interactions with others, and internalising it into its own preferences. However, with a constructivist value added, it is believed that social learning is a dynamic process, hence, either international norms or actors' preferences may change in their interactions. Accordingly, actors need to adapt to these changes rather than sticking to the initial norms. Furthermore, it is debateable whether the actor can perceive the

⁴⁶⁴ Arild Underdal, "Explaining compliance and defection: three models." *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 1 (1998): 21.

⁴⁶⁵ Randall Calvert. "The rational choice theory of social institutions: Cooperation, coordination, and communication." *Modern political economy: Old topics, new directions* 216 (1995): 244; Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Why comply? Social learning and European identity change." *International organization* 55, no. 3 (2001): 553-588. Social learning has also been applied in studies of the EU affairs. For instance, Tanja A. Börzel, and Risse Thomas "Conceptualizing the domestic impact of Europe." *The politics of Europeanization* (2003): 57-80; Frank Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier Ulrich. "Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe." *Journal of European public policy* 11, no. 4 (2004): 661-679; Richard Youngs. "Normative dynamics and strategic interests in the EU's external identity." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 2 (2004): 415-435.

⁴⁶⁶ Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Why comply? Social learning and European identity change", 560-561.

others in an objective way. As argued above, the actor's perception could be very subjective due to the confines of its knowledge and preferences.

Therefore, in order to understand what, and how much the actor would have learned from the interaction with others, it is crucial to understand the actors' type identities, and this is the reason that a large amount of work has been included in chapter 4 that illustrates the EU and China's type identities. In the analysis of their role identities, the understanding of their inner characteristics would help to determine how the role identities are constructed, why they vary in different phases, and whether they are based on fact or illusion. Furthermore, in international interactions, the external environment produces a general atmosphere for the role identity of actors, and the way they perceive each other determines their specific role identities. This being said, the specific role identities would not suddenly emerge out of the boundaries of the general structure, just as it would be extremely rare for two countries to abruptly become enemies in peace time.

This research argues that *identity* (which consists of type identity and role identity) is the key factor in understanding relations. It has to be *perceived* (otherwise it does not exist in the interaction of two actors) and be able to generate a corresponding identity. It can only influence *behaviour* by defining the scope of *interest*. The identity itself and the process of perceiving can be influenced by the external environment and its own type identity; but, after all, role identity is the 'crux' of interaction, the internal and external influence can only be functional while it is understood and internalised by identity.

5.3. Relations in Five Phases

Given that perceiving is a dynamic progress with variations, the role identities of the EU and China therefore have been transformed over time. One identity at a time represents a temporary perception, which is a fragment that constitutes the whole process. The objective standards used to divide the phases could be commercial status or political relations, but it should be noted that these objective standards are not the main influential factors; originally, role identities are the key factors to the transformation of a relationship.

How, then, to define the content of role identities in each phase? There could be more than one role identity at a time. For instance, when the diplomatic relationship was originally built in 1975, although the property of their role structure had become friendlier, they still belonged to two opposed ‘camps’. In the first decade of the millennium, the general atmosphere of the EU-China relationship was both harmonious and competitive — more cooperation has been undertaken, but also more conflicts have occurred. However, in a different time, the detailed atmosphere was not always as simple as the general image. In some phases, it was complicated as the nature of the role identities could be multifaceted. In this latter case, I will demonstrate the complex attributes of the atmosphere, and grasp the dominant essence of the identities.

5.3.1 1975-1989: Primary Partners

The first phase started with the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations in 1975, and ended in 1989 along with the subsequent effect of the Tiananmen events. During this period, the relationship between the European Economic Community (EEC) and China experienced a breakthrough, going from nothing to a set of considerable achievements. In the Cold War atmosphere, this bilateral relationship, as observers have illustrated, developed from a secondary relationship to an independent one.⁴⁶⁷ The barrier between the two bipolar blocs been lifted, and the role identities of the EEC and China transformed from ones of ‘enemies’ to ‘partners’. With these identities, substantial changes and progress was made between the two parties.

5.3.1.1 Context

In the Cold War era, the European-China relationship was generally derivative of the broader relationship of the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union.⁴⁶⁸ However, in the 1970s this tension was easing, and the atmosphere of ‘détente’ gave European countries a relatively relaxed period in which to pursue their independent foreign policies and develop creative

⁴⁶⁷ David Shambaugh, “China and Europe: the Development from a Secondary to an Independent Relationship”, in *China and Europe towards 21st century*, eds., Song Xinning and Zhang Xiaojin (The Social Science Press, 1997).

⁴⁶⁸ Nicola Casarini, “From secondary relationship to post-Cold War partnership”, in *The evolution of the EU and China relationship: from constructive engagement to strategic partnership*, 9; Wu Baiyi, “后冷战国际体系变动与中欧关系 (The Post-Cold War System Change and the Sino-EU Relations)”, 1-16.

relationships with a number of countries in the Eastern bloc. Arguably the most famous cases was the ‘Neue Ostpolitik’ undertaken by the Federal Republic of Germany.

Meanwhile on the other side of the Eurasian continent, under increasing pressure from the Soviet Union, Chinese leaders re-considered the environment of world politics and consequently proposed the ‘Three World Theory’⁴⁶⁹ with the aim of realigning the Western European powers and third world countries. This new perception of world politics led China to re-approach the US, and paved the way to establishing official diplomatic relations with other Western European countries. This turning point also meant that China has abandoned its overwhelming priority in its proletarian revolution, and started engaging with the world through a new identity—an independent ‘socialist country that belongs to the third world’⁴⁷⁰. Furthermore, three years after the establishment of diplomatic relations, China implemented the ‘reform and open’ policy, which reinforced China’s type identity as an open-minded international actor, and the market-oriented economic model was also welcomed by the Western market economies. To this extent, both Western European countries and China distanced themselves from the formula of superpower politics were been able to engage with each other on their own initiatives.

5.3.1.2 Role Identities

The main role identities of the EEC and China in this period were those of partners, both politically and economically. On China’s side, realignment with the Western European countries was a means to balance the influences of the superpowers. Chinese leaders emphasised the significance of forming the broadest united front for fighting against the superpowers’ hegemony.⁴⁷¹ Therefore, as a member of the ‘Second World’, EEC’s identity has

⁴⁶⁹ “Three World Theory” was first raised by Mao Zedong, categorizing the US and the USSR as the first world, Europe, Canada, Japan, Australia and other developed countries as the second world, China and other developing countries as the third world. More details and analysis on this theory see Arif Dirlik, “Mao Zedong Thought and the Third World/Global South”, *Interventions*, 2014, 16:2, 233-256; An, Jiang. “Mao Zedong’s “Three Worlds” Theory: Political Considerations and Value for the Times”, *Social Sciences in China* 43, no.1 (2013): 35-57; Herbert S. Yee, “The Three World Theory and Post-Mao China’s Global Strategy”, *International Affairs* 59, no. 2 (1983): 239-249.

⁴⁷⁰ Deng Xiaoping. *The selected works of Deng Xiaoping*, Volume 2, People’s Publishing House, July 1994, p.112, available online at <http://cddx.ncu.edu.cn/docs/20110221170427698613.pdf>. (accessed 2 February 2016)

⁴⁷¹ Zhou Enlai. “Report to the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China”, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64562/65450/4429430.html>. Other records of Chinese leaders’ (Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping) talking on this issue see Liao, Xinwen. “Strategic thoughts and policy-making to break

been perceived as a potential ally by China. To this end, building a formal relationship with the EEC was a strategic foreign policy for China and also a practice of its 'Three World Theory'.

On the European side, this realignment was praised in a political way as well. As Christopher Soames claimed, re-approaching China implied that the Europeans had become an active actor in international political arena, which gave the member states 'greater weight' to deal with the US,⁴⁷² and was also seen as an acknowledgement of the significance of European integration.⁴⁷³ This new momentum between China and Europe had been remarked upon a description that 'an entirely new factor has emerged in world politics...between the two great continuous centres of world civilization'⁴⁷⁴

Besides the political discourse, trade and economy was the sphere where both parties can achieve considerable benefits. They were both needed by each other, which makes them a pair of reciprocal partners. After 1978, China's central strategy switched to economic development, and in order to fulfil this strategy China needed foreign investment, advanced technology and managerial experience. Moreover, Western European countries could also be a new horizon to which to China's raw material (such as mineral resources) exports could be expanded. For the EEC, the increasing size of China's market implied a promising destination for its exports. China's low-cost advantage was later to also become attractive to European investors.

5.3.1.3 Corresponding Interactions

With the partner identities, the two parties actualized mutual high-level visits. Christopher Soames, then Vice-President of the Commission, visited China in May 1975, followed by his successor, Wilhelm Haferkamp, who visited Beijing in 1978. In the next year, Emilio Colombo, the then President of the European Parliament, and Roy Jenkins, the then President of the

the Soviet encirclement in 1960s and 1970s", available online at <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/138903/13236986.html>. (accessed 2 February 2016).

⁴⁷² Christopher Soames, "The European community and its place in the world, 8 May 1975", in *China and the European Economic community: the new connection*, ed., Harish Kapur (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986), 111–118.

⁴⁷³ Jörg Monar, "The establishment of EU-China relationship 40 years ago was then an affirmation to European integration", speech on the opening ceremony for EU-China 40th anniversary, available at http://world.chinadaily.com.cn/2015-05/20/content_20773966.htm. (accessed 6 February 2016).

⁴⁷⁴ Dick Wilson, "China and the European Community", *The China Quarterly* 53, (1973): 666.

Commission, paid various official visits to China. Political dialogue, however, was not confined to the leaders' level, but was open to the parliamentary and ministerial level as well.

Political communication contributed to the institutionalization of economic cooperation. The first trade agreement between the EEC and China came into force in June 1978, whereby a Joint Committee from both parties was established to monitor the functioning of the agreement. The 1978 agreement resulted in a number of achievements, i.e., giving both parties most-favoured nation treatment, implementing the liberalization of mutual trade, and expanding the exchange of economic delegations.⁴⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the EEC also provided economic assistance to China, including management training, technological cooperation and financial aid in agriculture and for the rural areas of China.⁴⁷⁶ A further comprehensive agreement was signed in 1985, which applied more sophisticated provisions to their trade and economic cooperation, and updating the 1978 cooperation framework to a more mature form for bilateral commercial interactions.⁴⁷⁷ Consequently, under this framework, mutual trade volume enjoyed a rapid increase during this period, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Trade between the European Community and China for 1975 and 1988 in Millions of ECU

	Imports	Exports	Total Volume
1975	667	1153	1820
1988	6999	5799	12798
Growth	949%	403%	603%

Source: *EC-China: A Statistical Analysis of Foreign Trade 1970-1979*, Eurostat, Statistical Office of the European Communities, 1981; EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat. Own calculations.

⁴⁷⁵ Trade Agreement between the European Economic Community and the People's Republic of China, Official Journal L 123 , 11/05/1978 P. 0002, available online at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.1978.123.01.0002.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:1978:123:TOC. (accessed 6 February 2016).

⁴⁷⁶ "Report on EU assistance to China", Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of China, see <http://gjs.mofcom.gov.cn/article/ar/as/201006/20100606985081.shtml>. (accessed 15 February 2016).

⁴⁷⁷ Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the European Economic Community and the People's Republic of China.

5.3.1.4 Summary

Compatible political thoughts and reciprocal economic needs constituted the shared knowledge between China and the EEC, and consequently constructed the accompanying role identities of the two parties. This brought China and Europe closer, and also established a long-term framework for their relationship.

However, given the normative characteristics of the EEC, which were analysed in the preceding chapter, it should be noticed that economic interactions were not just the way to acquire commercial profit, but also a civilian mean to promote a long-term transformation in political and societal areas. This foreshadowed the breach in the relationship in 1989, and continued to frame the EU's China policy after 1998, which will be discussed below.

5.3.2 1989-1992: China as a Conservative Communist Country

The second phase started in 1989, when the European Communities (EC) reacted to the Tiananmen events, and ended in 1992 by which time EC-China relations had been largely resumed. The bilateral relationship broke down in 1989 due to the political incidents on Tiananmen Square. The EC imposed a series of sanctions against China as a response to Beijing's decisions. One of these sanctions (the arms embargo) still remains in place today. The relationship was not frozen for long, however, as the EC re-approached China in 1990, and some sanctions were lifted at the time. 1992 was a turning point, as Deng Xiaoping's southern tour conveyed a signal that China would maintain policies of reform and opening up. Meanwhile, the EC-China bilateral political dialogue was re-established in June 1992, and the relationship moved on to another phase.

In the review of this period, it should be noted that the clash between the EC and China originated from their different identities, and the main explanation for their clash can be attributed to the different regimes in a special international context. On the surface, this clash was about human rights and using military force. But fundamentally, this clash was actually due to the different identities of a Communist country interacting with a democratic bloc. Furthermore, this clash had a subsequent impact on future bilateral policies. The EC officially

launched the ‘constructive engagement’ policy, and China considered lifting the embargo as one of the major purposes in its relationship with the EC/EU.

5.3.2.1 Context

1989 also marked the eve of the end of the Cold War. A pro-democracy reform momentum was impacting on the Communist bloc. First Poland and Hungary, then other Eastern European countries, abandoned the Communist regime and transformed into democracies. Meanwhile, similar public appeals for political reform also arose in China. However, what happened on Tiananmen Square showed that similar political appeals did not result in the same consequences, and political reform did not take place in Communist China.

Western European countries condemned the Chinese government’s repressive actions. Britain, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain deplored the Beijing authorities’ decision, West Germany perceived the repression as a regression in China’s development, and urged China ‘to return to its universally welcomed policies of reform and openness’.⁴⁷⁸

These forceful statements mainly indicated that China had conducted human rights abuse. However, the worldwide responses to the Tiananmen events were diverse, depending on different identities and perspectives. For instance, Czechoslovakia was then still a Communist country, but the Communist party was struggling to hold the regime together. Given this identity, the government shared the same position as the Beijing authorities, and expressed its support for China’s suppression of ‘the counter-revolutionary rebellion’. But diplomatic contact was ended right after the reformist leader gained power;⁴⁷⁹ the previous policy was abandoned as soon as the identity of Czechoslovakia changed into a democratic country. Clearly, democracies and Communist regimes had diametrically opposing stances at that time, and their opposing responses to the Tiananmen events was dependent on their different

⁴⁷⁸ Robert D. McFadden, “The West Condemns the Crackdown”, The New York Times, June 5, 1989, available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/05/world/the-west-condemns-the-crackdown.html>. (accessed 18 February 2016).

⁴⁷⁹ Frank. K. Columbus, ed., *Central and Eastern Europe in Transition, Volume 1*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1998), 23.

identities. Therefore, the EC who represented democratic regimes and stood as a normative power, issued sanctions against China.

5.3.2.2 Role Identities

If what has been explored above are the divergent type identities of the EC and China, then what were their role identities in the bilateral relationship in that period? And why did their role identities change? The EC perceived China as a conservative Communist country, but in contrast the EC is a bloc of democracies, and therefore their role identities should have made them adversaries. Even though the relationship was not as negative that it could be described as hostile, the basis for cooperation had, however, collapsed. The reasons for this incident in bilateral relationship is because of the transformation of the international atmosphere, and the break of their shared knowledge.

As mentioned above, 1989 was a year when political reform had become an unstoppable current in the Communist bloc. The ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ also granted Eastern European countries the freedom to choose their own regimes. The rise of democracy and the changes of ideology in these countries strengthened the West’s belief that its regime and ideology were more successful and attractive. In such an atmosphere, a pro-democratic movement in China was also be welcomed by the EC. However, the suppression of the movement in China’s capital showed that China refused to abandon its ideology and transplant Western ideology into Chinese society. Compared to those Eastern countries, Beijing’s hard-line attitude gave the impression of a China that was a relatively conservative Communist country to the EC.

At the same time, as discussed in the last chapter, the EC was then considered as a normative power with civilian instruments. While it had successfully influenced its Eastern European neighbours, it did not succeed in affecting China in the same way. As a civilian instrument, its economic assistance did not bring the anticipated reforms to China’s political regime. The EC clearly expressed its frustration over Beijing’s repression, and urged China to respect the norms on human rights, freedom and democracy, if China was to receive any support from the EC and its member states.⁴⁸⁰ With these uncompromising attitudes from both sides, the EC and

⁴⁸⁰ “Annex II Declaration on China”, The European Council: Madrid, 26-27 June, 1989.

China constructed opposing identities, each holding a contrary stance. These opposed identities were so overwhelming that, consequently, the EC imposed forceful sanctions on China, and the bilateral relationship fell to its lowest point.

5.3.2.3 Corresponding Interactions

Initially, it was the member states who condemned Chinese authorities, then on 27 June 1989, the European Council issued a declaration on China and exercised a series of sanctions, including an arms embargo, suspension of military cooperation and ministerial level contacts, reduction of cooperation in cultural, scientific and technical areas, and postponement of any other new cooperative projects. Meanwhile, the Community also decided to raise the issue of China's human rights abuse in international fora such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, where annual resolutions were adopted to criticise China's human rights record.⁴⁸¹ This range of actions effectively froze the bilateral relationship.

But this 'frozen' status did not last long. After the incident, China made a few changes to its human rights legislation, and enhanced the value of human rights in its political agenda. The State Council Information Office also started issuing reports on human rights in China.⁴⁸² Beijing's changes on human rights sent the signal that, to some extent, it had begun to build some shared knowledge with Western politics. The signal was slight, but still well received by the EC as 'justification' to see China as a less conservative country⁴⁸³, and rather more as a prospective actor which could be transformed into a Western-like democracy by civilian means. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping's south tour convinced Western observers that reformists were in the ascendance over the conservative forces, and the government was determined to continue the momentum of reform and open policies.⁴⁸⁴ This was a significant dynamic, which conveyed the commitment of China's marketization and engagement with the international society.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² See the reports on The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, available at <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/rqbps/index.htm>.

⁴⁸³ Richard Youngs, "The EU and China", in *The European Union and the Promotion of Democracy: Europe's Mediterranean and Asian Policies*, ed., Richard Youngs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 167.

⁴⁸⁴ Markus Taube, "Economic Relations between the PRC and the States of Europe", *The China Quarterly*, 169 (2002): 85-86.

1992 was also an important year for China in terms of reconstructing its own perception of the EC. The signing of the Maastricht Treaty and the foundation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy inspired Chinese observers to imagine a functional role of the European Union in a putative multipolar world. Perhaps the EU could become a new pole that could balance the US.⁴⁸⁵ Therefore, China stopped criticising the EU and sought to embrace the bloc as a new partner in a multipolar world.

In these circumstances, the bilateral relationship became rather warmer, and relatively close again at the beginning of 1990s. On 22 October 1990, EC foreign ministers decided to re-establish bilateral relations step by step, including economic cooperation and high-level contact.⁴⁸⁶ In the following month, the Spanish Foreign Minister, Fernandez-Ordonez was dispatched as an emissary to visit Beijing and to deliver this message.⁴⁸⁷ As a response, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Deputy Premier Zhu Rongji visited some EC member states and Brussels in 1991.⁴⁸⁸ The contacts at the ministerial level accelerated the resumption of the relationship, and as a result, economic cooperation and commercial trade had been restored by 1991. By 1992, the bilateral relations had been largely reinstated, and new environmental and political dialogues had been launched. The arms embargo, however, remained in effect.⁴⁸⁹

5.3.2.4 Summary

What happened to EC-China relations in 1989 was an incident in a special context. From the EC's perspective, Beijing's repression was a regression of what they expected from China's development. On the other hand, the sanctions and condemnation from the EC was also unacceptable for China. Therefore, their shared knowledge was broken and their role identities became opposed. After 1989, the internal and external changes enabled the two parties to

⁴⁸⁵ For instance, see Dingli Shen, "Why China sees the EU as a counterweight to American?", 48-53; Zhimin Chen, "China-EU relations in a new multi-polar and multi-partnership world", 1-16; Yi Wang, "EU Integration and World Multipolarity", *International Studies* 6, (2002): 39-64; Hu Jin, "The position of the European Union in Europe and the World", *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* 2, (1998): 110-115.

⁴⁸⁶ European University Institute, *European Political Cooperation Bulletin*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1990, Vol. 6, p. 322.

⁴⁸⁷ Anja Feege, *Internationale Reaktionen auf den 4. Juni 1989 in der VR China, Zwischen Solidarisierung, Schweigen und Sanktionen* (International Responses to June 4 1989 in the PRC, Between Solidarity, Silence, and Sanctions), Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1992, as quoted in Möller, Kay. "Diplomatic Relations and Mutual Strategic Perceptions: China and the European Union". *The China Quarterly*, 2002, Vol. 169, p. 17.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. p.18.

⁴⁸⁹ EU-China Relations: Chronology, European Union External Action Service, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/china/docs/chronology_2014_en.pdf (accessed 1 March 2016).

reconstruct their shared knowledge, among which economic interest was undoubtedly paramount. But, in relevance to the strategic identities in the last chapter, the EU also had normative interests, which meant the EU intended to use economic instruments to encourage China towards a transformation into some Western-favoured form. China, on the other hand, was a rising power in a dynamic international system, imagining the EU could act as a strategic partner against US hegemony. Their strategic purposes were thus asymmetrical, and both sides held merely one-way expectations that were not shared by the other. Whilst the economic ties could perform as the *a priori* shared knowledge and contribute towards a maturation in partner identities, those asymmetrical expectations could also be the unstable factors that could generate conflict.

5.3.3 1993-2004: Maturing Partners

EU-China relations experienced a boom in this phase. For example, bilateral trade rose from 31.0 billion ECU in 1993 to €175.7 billion in 2004,⁴⁹⁰ which, even taking into account the new EU members, still represented an impressive increase. Economic interests, in this sense, have become the primary basis for the shared knowledge that dominated the agenda of bilateral relations. Benefiting from the economic prosperity, the bilateral relationship developed rapidly, and was marked with considerable achievements. The EU issued five Communications/Policy Papers on China,⁴⁹¹ with China responding by issuing a Policy Paper on the EU in 2003. The two parties agreed to build a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and valued the bilateral relations in 2003 as being ‘better than at any time in history’.⁴⁹²

Above all, the EU’s status of not being the US shaped China’s perception of the EU. For example, the EU’s approach to China was different from the US’s in dealing with human rights, WTO accession, technological collaboration and arms sales. This perception was further reinforced by the European states’ opposing attitudes towards the US’s action in the Iraq War. *Not* being the US enabled the EU to give China a more intimate perception of the EU, which was constructive towards shaping a ‘partner’ identity. In short, this was indeed a golden age for EU-China relations, in that they identified each other as partners in economic cooperation,

⁴⁹⁰ EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat. ECU was replaced by Euro at a ratio of 1:1 in 1999.

⁴⁹¹ They are respectively the Communications in 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001 and a Policy Paper in 2003, which will be discussed later. All available at http://eeas.europa.eu/china/docs/index_en.htm

⁴⁹² “China’s policy paper on EU”, 13 October 2003.

and shared more knowledge in their relations with a third party (the US), which helped to construct a stronger identity of maturing partners and to maintain intensifying the relationship in a stable way.

5.3.3.1 Context

Transformation in the culture of international relations is critical to fostering a friendly environment within which actors can cooperate. As discussed in section 5.2.2.1, the external environment is influential in the construction of role identities. In contrast to the bipolar era during the Cold War, the post-Cold War culture was less Hobbesian, and even further evolved from Lockean to Kantian: on the basis of acknowledging the others' rights of life (sovereignty), actors also pursued collective interests through cooperation. In such a culture, role identities between/among actors could be either 'partners' or 'rivals', depending on shared knowledge. When both acknowledged certain common knowledge, they can then prefer to maintain their 'partner' identities; contrarily, when they do not share the same knowledge, or the knowledge is misunderstood or changed, then rival identities emerge and a conflict of some kind becomes almost inevitable.

Increasing globalization has provided a worldwide context for economic cooperation. As two of the major actors in the world economy, the EU and China, had realised the importance of concentrating on economic development. Since the implementation of reform and open policies, China had taken economic construction as its key national strategy. The EU, on the other hand, takes economic cooperation as its most convergent competence, using economic achievement as the leverage by which to promote integration.

In geopolitical terms, the Iraq War in 2003 provided a perspective through which China could view the EU differently. France and Germany opposed the US's military actions in the Iraq War,⁴⁹³ and in opposition to the US's unilateralism, the EU expressed its support for a multilateral approach in resolving that particular crisis.⁴⁹⁴ Taking an opposing stance to the US's unilateralism helped create further shared knowledge between China and the EU. In some

⁴⁹³ "France and Germany unite against Iraq war", The Guardian, 22 January 2003, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jan/22/germany.france>. (accessed 15 October 2016).

⁴⁹⁴ Council of the European Union, Extraordinary European Council, Brussels, 6466/03, 21 February 2003.

respects, simply not being the US or simply following Washington's lead helped shape China's perception of the EU as an actor in global politics.

5.3.3.2 Role identities

The role identities between the EU and China in this phase were those of maturing partners. This kind of role identity was based on the shared knowledge concerning economic cooperation and a common stance against unilateralism. However, it should be noticed that this shared knowledge came with certain kinds of expectations attached. The EU hoped that economic cooperation could promote the diffusion of norms, which would lead to political reform in China, whilst China's perception of the EU led to expectations that the EU would become a pole to constrain the US's hegemonic power. While the shared knowledge contributed to cooperation during this period, the associated expectations also presented risks that would undermine the cooperation.

The EU's Perception and Expectations of China

The EU's perception of China can be read in its Communications/Policy Papers on the country. In the 1995 Communication on China, 'A long term policy for China-Europe relations', it described China as an emerging power 'in both the military-political and the economic sphere',⁴⁹⁵ and a potentially active and influential actor that the EU should engage with. Thus, developing a long-term relationship with China had been seen as crucial for the EU in pursuing its goals in economic, security, and environmental domains. This had also helped to raise the EU's profile in China, and therefore enhance the EU's competitiveness in the international arena. What was conveyed from this Communication was an optimistic expectation for China's future development. The EU was 'eager' to see that China could play a 'responsible and constructive role' in its involvement with the international community, and 'believe (d)' that it is best for China to promote reform in line with international norms.⁴⁹⁶ This expectation was manifest in a policy of 'constructive engagement' in the political sphere, which aimed to encourage China to cooperate in the normative spheres of non-proliferation, civil society, the

⁴⁹⁵ Communication of the Commission, "A long term policy for China-Europe relations", Brussels, 05.07.1995, COM(1995) 279 final, available at http://eeas.europa.eu/china/docs/com95_279_en.pdf

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

rule of law, human rights and freedoms, and so on. These optimistic expectations notwithstanding, there was a possibility that the EU overestimated China's willingness, and capability, to cooperate in those normative areas. In other words, the EU's one-way expectation, might not have been shared by the Chinese. Nevertheless, this was the EU's first Communication on China; bilateral interaction is a dynamic process, as illustrated in Figure 9, and any interaction needs feedback and readjustment. Thus it is understandable that one side attached high valuation and expectation in the first instance, and observers need track the subsequent variations.

The following Communications were dynamic, related to domestic transitions and external changes. In the 1998 Communication, the EU highly valued the progress of China's reform and open policy, and also considered China as a more assertive and responsible actor on the regional and global stage⁴⁹⁷——China positively conformed to the EU's expectation that was outlined in the Communication of 1995. The EU was satisfied with its constructive engagement with China and decided to promote cooperation in all regards, and upgrade to a far more comprehensive partnership. In 2000, The Commission also issued the Report on the Communication of 1998, which confirmed the achievements in this comprehensive partnership, and committed the EU to further strengthen it. The Communication in 2001 showed a little difference to the previous two. Despite the mainstream acknowledgement of the achievements and the need to develop bilateral relations, it also pointed out certain difficulties, namely different political systems and human rights concerns, in its engagement with China. Nonetheless, the Commission noted that 'China is both part of the problem and the solution to all major issues'⁴⁹⁸, and thus that positive engagement remained a necessity.

The EU's 2003 Policy Paper presented a highly positive perception of China as being an increasingly 'proactive and constructive'⁴⁹⁹ player in international affairs, and also one of being more energetic and influential in the global economy. In China's domestic concerns, the EU

⁴⁹⁷ Communication from the Commission, "Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China", Brussels, 25.03.1998, COM(1998) 181 final.

⁴⁹⁸ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, "EU Strategy towards China: Implementation of the 1998 Communication and Future Steps for a more Effective EU Policy", Brussels, 15.5.2001, COM(2001) 265 final.

⁴⁹⁹ Commission Policy Paper for Transmission to the Council and the European Parliament, "A maturing partnership - shared interests and challenges in EU-China relations (Updating the European Commission's Communications on EU-China relations of 1998 and 2001)", Brussels, 10.9.2003, COM(2003) 533 final.

recognised the significant progress it had made in strengthening civil society and the rule of law, and also gave credit to China's efforts to abide by its commitments as a WTO member. In the paper, the EU and China were seen as sharing 'ever-greater interests' in bilateral trade and global governance, while also facing the common challenges of terrorism, weapons proliferation, international crime and global health concerns. All of these shared interests and challenges were included in the shared knowledge in bilateral interactions, and defined a mutually beneficial partnership.

In accordance with previous Communications, this Policy Paper also stated concerns over human rights. Despite these concerns, all these five Communications and Policy Paper expressed a positive attitude towards China, insisting that no matter what the problems, it was still necessary, and beneficial for, both parties to develop their relationship to the strategic level.

It should be noted that ever since the first Communication in 1995, what was attached to these documents were optimistic expectations that China would transform to an EU-favoured country that could 'fully embrace democracy, free market principles and the rule of law' (plus human rights),⁵⁰⁰ but without genuinely exploring the degree to which the Chinese government would share these expectations, and how far the EU's intervention would be accepted.

China's Perception and Expectations of the EU

Beijing perceived the EU's policy papers constructively and presented positive feedback in its first Policy Paper towards the EU. China affirmed the EU's significant role at the regional level and on the global stage, and emphasised that 'there is no fundamental conflict of interest between China and the EU and neither side poses a threat to the other'⁵⁰¹. This was an assessment based on a realist perspective, and reflected how China viewed the EU as being different from the US. Not being opponents in a power transition game, the EU did not have the same degree of geopolitical and strategic concerns with China as the US, therefore it was

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ "China's policy paper on EU", 2003/10/13.

easier for the EU and China to maintain a stable relationship. Not being the US might also have impacted on the EU's own views of itself. For instance, it did not see its security as being challenged by China's rise in East Asia (or at least not in the way the US perceived this rise). As a result, the EU had a welcoming attitude towards China's integration into the international community, and it was not as worried as the US about lifting the arms embargo, a case that will be studied in detail in the next chapter.

The perception that the EU was not the US had been reinforced by the transatlantic rift over the Iraq Crisis. The opposing stance against US unilateralism was welcomed by China, but might also have been exaggerated by China in the sense that China expected the EU to oppose the unipolar system and constrain the US's hegemonic power. China perceived that the EU *was not* the US, but had not fully understood what the EU really *was*: anti-unilateralism did not, in reality, equate to pro-multipolarity. Just like the EU's over-optimistic expectations, this was the expectation that China mistakenly made of the EU (and will be further discussed in the following section).

In terms of the EU's expectations, China frankly pointed out that there were different views and disagreements between them. Although the paper did not explain what, specifically, these disagreements were, it did mention bilateral 'differences in historical background, cultural heritage, political system and economic development level(s)'⁵⁰². It is reasonable to deduce that it had concerns with human rights, democracy and trade disputes. China tried to convince the EU that given these differences in qualities, it would be natural to have these disagreements, and thus implied that the EU should not regard such narratives in a particularly harsh manner. These words, as alluded to by China, could also be considered an overly optimistic expectation.

These disagreements notwithstanding, China assessed the common good weighted more, and committed to cooperating with the EU in various spheres (e.g., combating international terrorism, sustainable development, environmental protection), many of which were in line with the EU's strategies. This assessment reflected both parties' preferences in that period, namely the common good outweighed disputes, and constructed the appropriate shared

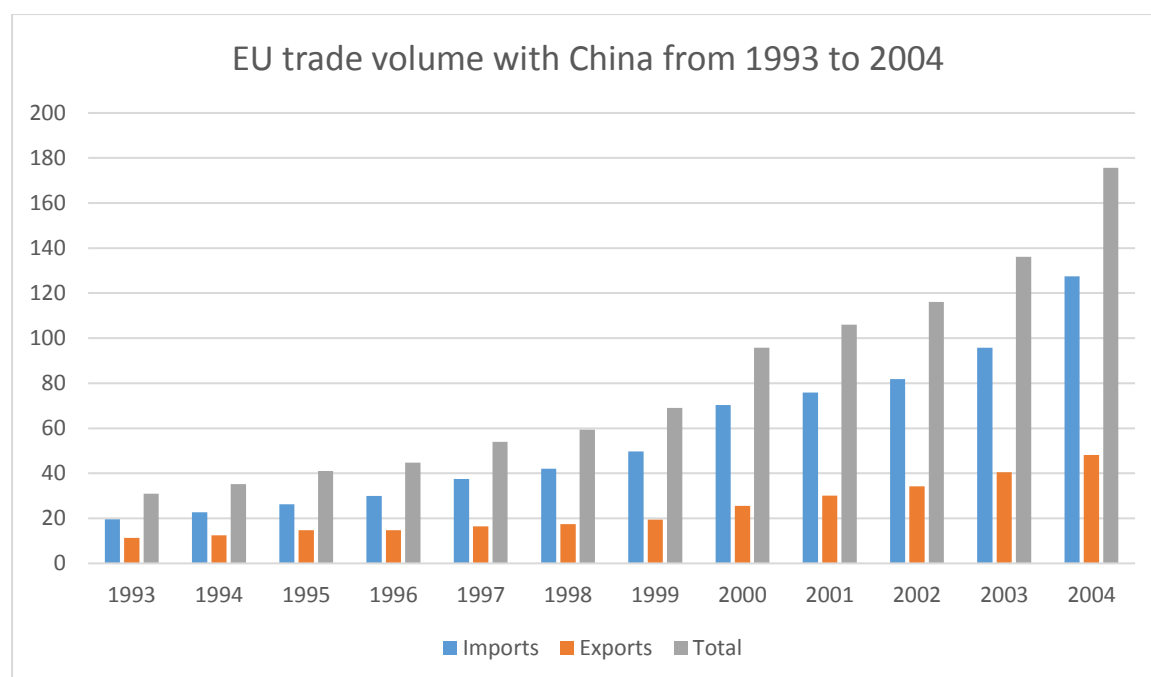
⁵⁰² Ibid.

knowledge to strengthen the partner identities, which was ultimately the theme of this phase. However, besides their common stances, each side had neglected their counterpart's additional needs (e.g., the EU's demands on human rights, democracy, etc.; China's principle of sovereignty and non-interference). Therefore, both sides were actually over-optimistic in holding the one-way expectation that the other would finally comply with their wishes. Moreover, neither party had a clear estimate as to the other's boundaries in these disputes, giving rise to a potential reason for a break in the shared knowledge.

5.3.3.3 Corresponding Interactions

The most remarkable phenomenon in this phase was the boost of bilateral economic activities. Trade rose from €31.0 billion in 1993 to €175.7 billion in 2004—a 466.8% increase, contributed to partly by the enlargement of the EU, but most importantly from the intensified bilateral trade (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. EU trade volume with China from 1993 to 2004

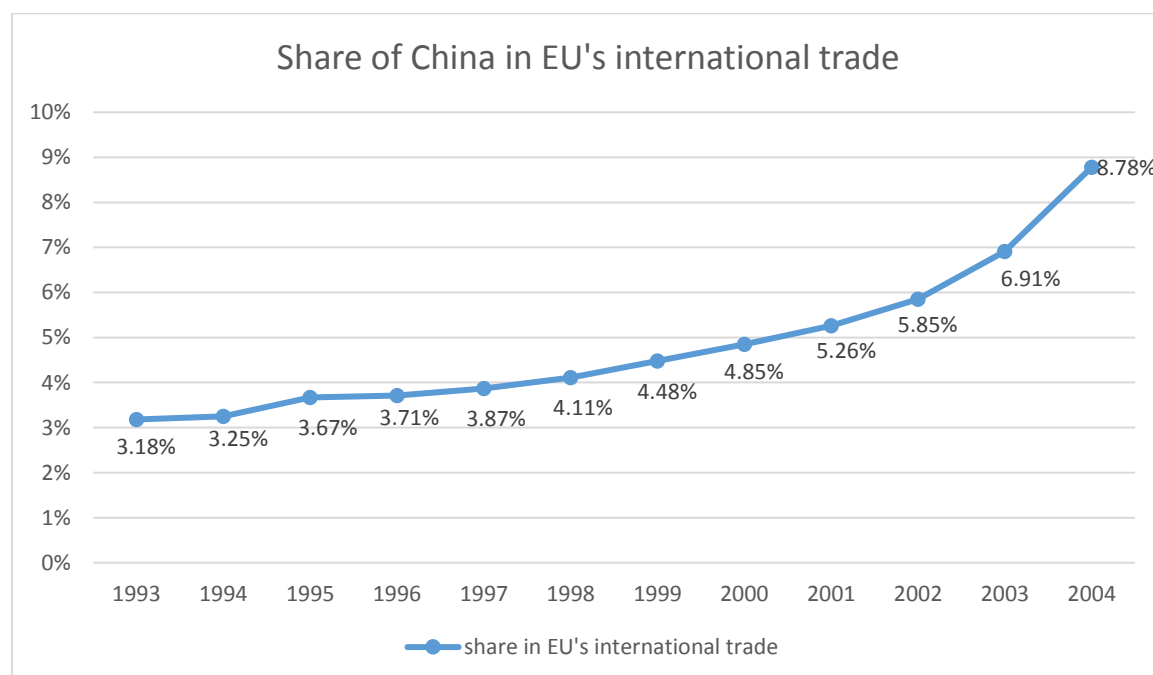


Series: Trade volume (Billions of euros)

Source: EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat. Own calculations.

The share of trade with China of the EU's total international trade also grew steadily (see Figure 12). China had a 3.18% share in the EU's international trade in 1993, a figure which had more than doubled, to 8.78%, by 2003, showing the importance of enhancing China's partnership in the EU's trade pattern. China had become the EU's second-largest trading partner by 2003.⁵⁰³ On the other hand, the EU had become China's largest trading partner by 2004, and achieved a 15.4% share of China's trade volume.⁵⁰⁴ Bilateral trade was on a high-speed track, and continued towards an even larger scale. Direct investment also expanded in this period. The EU's direct investment towards China increased from €787 million in 1995 to €3865 million in 2004,⁵⁰⁵ thus reinforcing China's role as a key investment destination. China's investment in the EU remained at a relatively low level at that time, but has increased dramatically since the crisis in 2008, which will be discussed in later sections.

Figure 12. Share of trade with China as a percentage of the EU's total international trade



Series: shared percentage (%)

Source: EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat. Own calculations.

⁵⁰³ EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat.

⁵⁰⁴ "Statistical table of China-Europe trade in 2004", Department of European Affairs, MOFCOM, available at <http://ozs.mofcom.gov.cn/article/zojmgx/date/200501/20050100338690.shtml>.

⁵⁰⁵ EU direct investment flows, breakdown by partner country and economic activity (NACE Rev. 1.1, up to 2009) (bop_fdi_flows), Eurostat.

The boom in economic cooperation reflected the concomitant political atmosphere. Political relations had been supported by systematic dialogues and meetings. Bilateral political dialogue was established in 1994, and had been upgraded to annual summits at the highest level in 1998. Additionally, the Ministerial Troika was designed to coordinate the allocation of power and resources for cooperation, with assistance from Political Directors and Geographical Directors Troika. At the lower level, sectoral dialogue and expert dialogue was intended to address specific issues, and the EC-China joint Committee that was established in 1978 still functions to monitor the process of cooperation. The institutionalization of political dialogues built the legal framework for bilateral communication, and served as ‘a device for mutual learning and the transfer of knowledge’⁵⁰⁶. Furthermore, on the basis of deepening and strengthening the existing cooperation, this could stimulate the development of policies and the initiation of sensitive topics,⁵⁰⁷ which could help to enhance mutual understanding and facilitate the translation of both sides’ expectations of each other into reality.

This period witnessed various achievements in bilateral relations. The EU and China signed a series of agreements after 1998 including the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, the Agreement on Maritime Transport, the Tourism Agreement, and so forth. The Agreement on China’s WTO accession and the Agreement on Cooperation in the Galileo Satellite Navigation Program were the two most remarkable achievements in that period. The EU and China also reached a compromise in terms of human rights. China accepted a specific dialogue on human rights in 1995 (interrupted in 1996 and resumed in 1997). The EU and member states also realised the sensitivity of this topic for China’s political agenda, and therefore the member states ceased tabling resolutions against China’s human rights record in UNCHR in 1997. Even though the EU continued to express its concern in this regard, but in a much more low key way compared to the US approach, this was a proof that the EU was taking a different approach to China than the US.

Furthermore, with regards to the US, the Iraq War of 2003 brought the EU and China closer in terms of strategy. Major EU member states (i.e., France and Germany) opposed US military

⁵⁰⁶ Francis G. Snyder, *The European Union and China, 1949-2008: basic documents and commentary*, (Hart, 2009), p.768.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

actions, and their voices were taken by China as a signal to align with the EU against US unilateralism. In the Joint Statement for the 7th EU-China Summit (2004), China advocated ‘promoting the multilateralism and the democratization of international relations’.⁵⁰⁸ Chinese observers viewed the EU as a counterweight to the US, and a strategic partner to facilitate the construction of a multipolar world in which US power could be contained.⁵⁰⁹ The EU also implied that there was a strategic convergence, as then High Representative Javier Solana welcomed Chinese comments that ‘there was too much unilateralism in 2003’, and commented that ‘the EU will match China’s efforts in...multilateral diplomacy’.⁵¹⁰ This tendency was seen by other analysts as heralding an emerging ‘EU-China axis’ that would present a serious challenge to US hegemony.⁵¹¹ Scholars debated the genuine nature of this ‘strategic partnership’. They argued that despite the maturing relationship, the wording ‘axis’ was somewhat exaggerated as the EU had no intention of breaking its transatlantic alliance, nor did it want to challenge US hegemony.⁵¹² In fact, the EU was rather cautious about the use of the word ‘multipolar’ or ‘democratization of international relations’, neither of which were contained in the EU version of the Joint Statement for the 7th EU-China Summit, 2004.⁵¹³

Whereas they agreed to build on the discourse of a ‘strategic partnership’, there were two misunderstandings concerning their grand strategies on world order. Firstly, although the EU and China had common ground to oppose US unilateralism, they had no shared knowledge on how to deal with it, nor that of the US hegemony. Secondly, they both endorsed multilateralism. But what the EU meant was to engage in a multilateral approach, which could enhance its profit in the global stage, rather than challenge the US; this is not what China had planned for a

⁵⁰⁸ Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the European Union, “China-EU Joint Statement”, 2004/05/12, available at <http://www.chinamission.be/chn/ssht/wzlfwblish/t101945.htm> (accessed 6 March 2016).

⁵⁰⁹ See for examples, Shen Dingli. “Why China sees the EU as a counterweight to American?”; Wang Yi. “EU Integration and World Multipolarity”; Hu Jin. “The position of the European Union in Europe and the World”. More details will be illustrated in Chapter 5.

⁵¹⁰ Javier Solana, “EU and China, strategic partners with global objectives: Interview”, By People’s Daily Online, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/sghr_int/79739.pdf (accessed 5 March 2016).

⁵¹¹ David Shambaugh, “China and Europe: The Emerging Axis”, 243-248; David Scott, “China and the EU: A Strategic Axis for the Twenty-First Century?”, 23-45.

⁵¹² Terry Narramore, “China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy”, 87-108; Axel Berkofsky, “The EU-China Strategic Partnership: rhetoric versus reality”, 103-104; Richard Maher, “The elusive EU–China strategic partnership”, *International Affairs* 92, no. 4 (2016): 959-976.

⁵¹³ Council of the European Union, “7th EU-China Summit, The Hague, 8 December 2004, Joint Statement”, Brussels, 8 December 2004, available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/82998.pdf (assessed 8 March 2016).

multipolar world, in which both China and the EU could be a pole to restrain US power——similar in means, distinct in goals.

This close relationship led to proposals to lift the arms embargo against China. This proposal was seen by China as a proof of the effectiveness of the strategic relationship, but it did not eventually succeed. This case started in 2003, but it would be more appropriate to discuss it further in the next section.

5.3.3.4 Summary

In this period, both sides perceived each other as increasingly important partners, and the relevant role identities defined a mutually beneficial relationship in which the ties between the two parties largely intensified. In turn, the improved mutual understanding and the various and considerable achievements contributed to the promotion of the relationship to the comprehensive strategic level which, as China's then Premier Minister Wen Jiabao interpreted, was a multifaceted and multileveled cooperation, aiming for long-term, mutual beneficial interests on the basis of reciprocal respect and trust.⁵¹⁴ Despite the existing disagreements and misunderstandings discussed above, ultimately, they did not affect the reality that mutual benefits and the common good were the dominant shared knowledge during that period. However, with the deepening and extension of this harmonious relationship, more expectations would be raised. These expectations of each other would gradually and finally accelerate the emergence of disputes and damage the content of shared knowledge.

5.3.4 2005-2008: critical friends

The atmosphere in this phase was complicated; on the one hand, relations were becoming even closer building on the result in the last phase. On the other hand, more conflicts had appeared in the spheres of politics and trade. Accordingly, the role identities between the two parties were complex as well. Were they partners? Were they competitors? Or maybe both? As a former EU official described, they were 'critical friends'.⁵¹⁵ They were firstly friends, but being

⁵¹⁴ Wen Jiabao, "Vigorously Promoting The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between China and the EU", Speech on the China-EU Investment and Trade Forum, 2004/05/12, available at <http://www.chinamission.be/chn/ssht/wzlfwblsh/t101946.htm> (accessed 15 March 2016).

⁵¹⁵ Interview in the UK, October 2015.

critical of each other. As they became closer, and the deeper their engagement went, the more feedback they were receiving from each other. This feedback—either positive or negative—had presented more information for each to evaluate their counterpart. Positive feedback maintained the momentum of being friends, and negative ones resulted in critique. Yet another reason is that the closer relations between the two parties generated more expectations on each other. These expectations—if they could be met—would become shared knowledge for the partner identities; if not, they could become reasons for criticism.

5.3.4.1 Context

Not much changed during this period at the global level. Globalization continued, and the culture of the world remained between the Lockean and Kantian. But numerous changes took place at the bilateral level. In 2005, China was the fifth largest economy, the third largest exporter, the fourth largest importer in the world,⁵¹⁶ and the third biggest Foreign Direct Investment destination.⁵¹⁷ China, in other words, was playing an increasingly decisive role in the world economy.

The EU was experiencing a significant change at the same time. Enlargement in 2004 and 2007 had expanded the scale of the EU, both geographically and economically. The number of member states increased to 27 in 2007, along with GDP which grew from €10002.3 billion in 2003 to €13054.0 billion in 2008, and the growth rate had peaked at 3.3% in 2006.⁵¹⁸ The EU was the largest economy and market in the world, and also represented an influential regional power in dealing with international affairs.

At the bilateral level, given China's sheer size and rapid growth rate, the EU believed that China had huge potential to play an even larger role in the future.⁵¹⁹ This belief, as Breslin indicated, created an exaggerated image of China, and empowered China 'by the way in which

⁵¹⁶ World Development Indicators, World Databank, The World Bank.

⁵¹⁷ "Annex table 01. FDI inflows, by region and economy, 1990-2015", World Investment Report 2016: Annex Tables, United Nations conference on Trade and Development.

⁵¹⁸ GDP and main components (t_nama_10_gdp), Eurostat.

⁵¹⁹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, "EU – China: Closer partners, growing responsibilities", Brussels, 24.10.2006, COM(2006) 631 final.

others think about it'.⁵²⁰ Consequently, this imagination changed the EU's perception of China as an elementary partner, into one of being more like a competitor. This variation of perception partly originated from the deduction of the tendency of China's dramatic developments, and partly because the EU was disappointed with China (and, indeed, vice-versa).

The reason for defining this period as 'disappointing' is that the shared knowledge between two parties had cracked somewhat in this phase. As mentioned in the last section, whilst the relationship was intensifying, each party placed greater expectations of what the other could shoulder. These expectations, however, had either originated from one-way misunderstandings, or were beyond the counterpart's willingness, or capability, to address, and thus could not be implemented. The disillusion of these expectations led to the cracking of the shared knowledge, and thereby brought a certain level of conflict to the relationship, a subject that will be discussed further below.

5.3.4.2 Role identities

There were three areas of shared knowledge that constructed the partner role identities in the last phase. As previously mentioned, these are multipolarity/multilateralism, economic cooperation and political coordination. In this phase, the reason that the role identities became more competitive is that these three shared areas of knowledge became partly cracked. The EU-China relationship had become closer in the last phase, but did it necessarily follow that closer relations should naturally bring more conflict? Certainly not. It is not the relations that generate conflicts, but the actors' expectations that do. As discussed above, closer relations brought higher expectations. These expectations, which originated from one actor's type identity, would be placed on the shoulders of the other actor. However, the actors' type identities could be quite different, thus these expectations could not be met, and would thereby construct a negative feedback cycle, eventually shaking the basis of the shared knowledge.

Consequently, all the three areas of shared knowledge that had been built in the previous phase were called into question during this period. After their honeymoon period, this 'couple' faced

⁵²⁰ Shaun Breslin, "The soft notion of China's 'soft power'," *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2011): 258.

a crisis in their relationship. Here we need to connect the shared knowledge with their type identities that were analysed in the last chapter, and explore why and how the shared knowledge became cracked. This could be read as evidence to explain how type identity influences role identity.

Multipolarity and Multilateralism

Firstly, multi-polarity/multilateralism was the reason the two parties were brought closer together in terms of strategy. As discussed above, however, this ‘strategic convergence’ was based on misunderstandings. Whilst both parties opposed US unilateralism, their approaches were based on different perspectives. The Chinese appeal for multipolarity was to constrain US hegemony and balance the allocation of power. However, the EU’s preference for multilateralism was to shape an EU-favoured way in which global politics would be conducted. They might have been a rhetorical convergence at the beginning in general, but in their natures the Chinese discourse was instrumental and the EU discourse was rather normative.⁵²¹ And, concerning the case of the US, it was clear this divergence would quickly be exposed.

When China perceived that Europe opposed the Iraq War, and heard clearly the then French President Chirac’s stance on a multipolar world⁵²², Beijing thought this could be an opportunity to pull the EU away from the US. However, Beijing underestimated the sophisticated nature of the EU as a supranational polity. Various member states had different preferences in foreign policies, and quite a number of them did not include China in their key diplomatic agendas.⁵²³ In the case of the arms embargo, China aimed to use the strategic relationship to pursue its political interests. It also sought to test and intensify the strategic relationship by requesting the embargo be lifted. However, when the US opposed such an initiative, not many member states

⁵²¹ David Scott, “Multipolarity, Multilateralism and Beyond ...? EU-China Understandings of the International System”, *International Relations* 27, no. 1 (2013): 30-51.

⁵²² Reports on Mr Chirac’s position on “multipolar world” could be found at “Chirac urges fairer world order”, *BBC News*, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4024005.stm>; Chirac’s “Multipolar World”, *The Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2004/02/04/chiracs-multipolar-world/ba8beab0-d6d1-4027-8328-02a8beead252/>; Chirac responds to Blair: “World is multipolar”, *China Daily*, <http://app1.chinadaily.com.cn/star/2003/0501/cn9-2.html>. (accessed 18 March 2016).

⁵²³ For instance, Baltic countries, Central and Eastern European countries such as Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia who has higher priorities with the US and Russia, and South European countries such as Spain and Portugal who has higher priorities in Latin America.

were willing to sacrifice their transatlantic relations purely to intensify EU-China strategic relations.

After all, the EU is a supranational entity, which did not have the internal shared knowledge to stand with China against US hegemony. The EU and China did not share the same type identities in terms of strategy and polity. China had high expectations in this regard, and whilst it might have been disappointing to be unable to achieve this result, it was better to realise this, than continuing with the false role identity of its strategic partners.⁵²⁴

Economic Cooperation

Economic cooperation is the core of the bilateral relationship, it functioned, and is still functioning, as a pole to carry further the development of the relationship. Despite the achievements in bilateral trade, China was becoming increasingly competitive with the EU, and the trade deficit on the EU side increased year by year. According to Eurostat, in 2005, the EU's imports from China were €161.0 billion, and exports were €51.7 billion, resulting in a €109.3 billion trade deficit, which has expanded 9-fold from the same figure in 1995 (€11.6 billion). Although the EU recognised that the deficit with China was due to the fact that Chinese exports had replaced exports from other Asian countries which had also enjoyed the surplus with the EU in the past,⁵²⁵ the large trade deficit still raised question on the EU's commercial performance and raised public concern. The deficit was attributed to the structure of bilateral trade. Chinese low value-added goods (especially textiles, clothing and footwear) presented a direct challenge to a number of EU member states (e.g., Spain, Portugal, Italy and Slovenia), in which similar products accounted for a large proportion of exports. As a developing country, China had a low value chain and was in the process of upgrading. Thus China's basic trade structure was exporting low valued-added products and importing high value-added products. As a result, while some member states whose exports were based on products with high added

⁵²⁴ Here "strategic" specifically means the strategies on global order, but in general it should also contain economic relations, civil communications, cooperation in other global affairs and etc.

⁵²⁵ Commission working document, "Accompanying COM(2006) 631 final: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities, A policy paper on EU-China trade and investment: Competition and Partnership", Brussels, 24.10.2006, COM(2006) 632 final.

value (Germany for example) saw China as a partner and destination for exports, South European states saw China as a challenge.

Moreover, the EU criticised China's implementation of WTO obligations and economic environment for trade and investment. In particular, the issue of intellectual property rights concerned a number of states in the sectors of engineering and telecoms (Sweden), pharmaceuticals (the UK and Ireland) and luxury brands (France and Italy). This issue also presented China as a challenge to these member states. Here, China represented a double face to the EU; to some member states, the sheer size of the Chinese market and increasing Chinese investment represented an opportunity for them. To some others, Chinese products and behaviours were challenges. In fact, China was both an opportunity and a challenge to them, and indeed to the EU as a whole. In spite of the arguments, the two parties managed to keep the disputes at a controlled level as individual cases, and they ultimately did not affect the overall economic and commercial macro-level relationship. But for political relations, the conflicts exceeded the ability to control, and undermined the relationship.

Political Coordination

In each previous communication report towards China, the EU expressed its expectation of China's improvement in human rights and political reforms through the civil engagement with the EU. However, an expectation cannot be held for long if it is not satisfied within a reasonable time. From the EU's perspective, after the 'constructive engagement' policy been implemented for a decade after 1995, and China had still not meet the EU's expectations in this regard.⁵²⁶ Additionally, the EU Commission was criticised for prioritising economic interests over normative principles; but now even the commercial relationship were in tension, so the Commission had no excuse for not altering its policy. On the Chinese side, it enjoyed the atmosphere that resulted when both parties put aside their political disputes and concentrated

⁵²⁶ Observers also call it "unconditional engagement", arguing that the EU "gives China access to all the economic and other benefits of cooperation with Europe while asking for little in return", see John Fox and François Godement, *A Power Audit of EU-China Relations*, European Council on Foreign Relations (2009), p.2.

on economic cooperation. Therefore, it was difficult to either understand or accept the EU's pressure and criticism on normative issues.

This dispute regarding human rights and political reform should be understood from their type identities. On the one hand, the EU is a normative power, which has normative initiatives and values the principles of freedom, rule of law, the liberal market and democracy. Furthermore, as a supranational entity, its values went beyond the borders of its sovereignty, thus it believes in the legitimacy of transnational intervention on human rights. On the contrary, as an Eastern country that had recently freed itself (or was even yet to free itself) from poverty, China maintains a different discourse on human rights in which the rights to subsistence and development were prioritised over Western norms; and, as a sovereign nation state, it sees the EU's behaviour as illegitimate intervention and a violation of sovereignty.

The incompatibility of the respective type identities had existed since the establishment of the bilateral relationship, and the two parties had reached a compromise during the last phase. So why had this become a serious issue in this period in particular? One factor can be attributed to the change of leadership in several major states in Europe, resulting in new diplomatic principles enhancing the normative characteristic of the EU, and made it more integrated during this initiative.

Another important reason was that of unfulfilled expectations. The EU expected its civilian instruments (economic assistance, civil engagement, people-to-people exchange and training, etc.) could help transform China's economy, society, or even politics. But the result was disappointing from the EU's perspective. Ten years is a long time from a certain perspective, yet is only a short time for a country to develop, especially in the spheres of society and culture. Consequently, the EU was disappointed at China's improvement, and China was also disappointed (or even indignant) at the EU's intervention; at this point, the role identities became adversarial with regards to human rights.

5.3.4.3 Corresponding Interactions

With the rupture in the shared knowledge, so their partner identities changed, and the behaviours adjusted accordingly. China had proposed to lift the arms embargo in its 2003 Policy Paper on the EU, and Chinese officials had repeatedly stressed that the embargo was a form of political discrimination which was not conducive to the strategic partnership.⁵²⁷ France and Germany were in favour of lifting the embargo⁵²⁸, and indicated this at the European Council. The EU debated the member states' stances towards this proposal, which was supported by the UK, Italy and Spain, but opposed by the Nordic countries such as Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.⁵²⁹ The Parliament linked arms exports to China's human rights record, and refused to give consent to lifting it.⁵³⁰ The strongest opposition came from the US, who argued that the EU's suggestion to lift the arms embargo was 'sending the wrong signals on China's human rights record and military build-up that threatens a peaceful resolution of Taiwan and other Asian issues'.⁵³¹

The debate remained ongoing until March 2005, when Beijing passed the Anti-Secession Law against Taiwan. Many observers claimed that the issue of this law was the trigger to stop the European campaign to lift the embargo,⁵³² whilst some analysts believe that the key factor was

⁵²⁷ "Wen Jiabao: Arm Sales Embargo against China Is a Legacy of the Cold War", 2004/12/08, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zzjg_663340/xos_664404/dqzzywt_664812/t173843.shtml. "EU Arms Embargo is "political discrimination", says Chinese Ambassador", <https://euobserver.com/news/18891>; "Restoring arms sales is to abolish political discrimination against China", http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_4320000/newsid_4324100/4324141.stm, accessed 26 March 2016.

⁵²⁸ "Arms Embargo on China Makes No More Sense: Chirac", *Xinhua News Agency*, January 28, 2004, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/phfnt/85597.htm>; "Schröder Calls for End to Arms Embargo against China", *Deutsche Welle*, 2 December 2003, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/schr%C3%B6der-calls-for-end-to-arms-embargo-against-china/a-1047143>. (accessed 9 April 2016).

⁵²⁹ Terry Narramore, "China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy", 100.

⁵³⁰ Van Den Broeke, Press Officer, Foreign Affairs Committee, "Code on arms export must be binding", <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+IM-PRESS+20051003IPR00966+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>; Elmar Brok, "Report on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament (2005/2134(INI))", 34, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2005-0389+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=bg>, accessed 10 April 2016.

⁵³¹ Kristin Archick, Richard F. Grimmett and Shirley Kan, "European Union's Arms Embargo on China: Implications and Options for U.S. Policy", CRS Report for Congress, April 15, 2005.

⁵³² Shao Cheng Tang, "The EU's policy towards China and the arms embargo", *Asia Europe Journal*, 3, no. 3 (2005): 313-321; Bates Gill, "The United States and the China-Europe relationship", in *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects*, eds. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, Zhou Hong (New York: Routledge, 2008), 272.

the US pressure, which was too strong for the EU to ignore.⁵³³ Human rights was also a significant principle held by the Nordic countries and other normative groups against lifting the proposal. Also, as a Chinese consultant who was accessible to the Chinese policy circle argued, because there were member states with this normative stance, it was easier for the US to win over China. Because the vote on lifting the embargo needed to be unanimous, China needed to get the Union's consent, but the US only needed to find one opposing voice, so it is perhaps no surprise that it succeeded. 'It was all about the mechanism of the EU', as the consultant said.⁵³⁴

These reasons notwithstanding, the fundamental reason lies in the characteristics of the EU and China and their role identities. As a normative power, the EU cannot defy the principle of human rights; as a Western bloc with member states who share good relations with the US, it cannot take the risk of departing from its transatlantic partner on a 'diverging path'.⁵³⁵ And, when these debates were tabled at the EU level, due to the unanimous mechanism on this topic, it would be more difficult for the Union to produce a 'Yes' than a 'No'. On the other side, it was reasonable for China, as a rising power, to seek to intensify the strategic partnership by pursuing this specific case. But the very origin of the problem arose from the discourse of 'strategic partners'. This rhetorical role identity could not be fully supported by their asymmetrical motivations. In contrast, it gave the two parties an exaggerated sense of their relationship, which led them to impose over-weighted expectations on their counterparts, and ultimately left them disappointed with each other.

However, divergent attitudes towards global order did not affect the economic relationship. From 2005 to 2008, EU-China trade volume increased from €209.9 billion to €322.7 billion,⁵³⁶ the EU became China's largest trading partner and China was the EU's second largest trading

⁵³³ Nicola Casarini, "The International Politics of the Chinese Arms Embargo Issue", *International Spectator*, 42, no. 3 (2007): 371-389; Zhongping Feng "The new strategic triangle: China, Europe, USA", Position Papers to the international symposium, "The new strategic triangle: China, Europe and the United States in a changing international system" held in Beijing on November 2nd and 3rd, 2006.

⁵³⁴ Interview in Renmin University of China, Beijing, March 2014.

⁵³⁵ Bates Gill and Robin Niblett, "Diverging paths hurt U.S. and Europe", *Pacific Forum CSIS*, September 12, 2005.

⁵³⁶ EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat.

partner. Bilateral trade had brought mutual benefits for each party,⁵³⁷ and had a significant impact on both sides' economic security.⁵³⁸ Nevertheless, in spite of the positive dynamic, the trade deficit and the imports of low-value added manufactories brought disputes to the bilateral trade relations. The trade imbalance undermined the image of China as a reciprocal partner, and caused domestic pressure to make this an issue in member states' political agendas. Textile imports from China, in particular, had led to serious dispute and the rise of protectionism in Europe.

However, it should be noted that the member states' attitudes on these two issues were divergent. Not all the member states with trade deficits were concerned. Member states such as Germany, France, the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark—who exported high-value added products or services to China—did not share the same pressures as Italy, Spain, Portugal and Slovakia. As a result, member states had divergent perceptions of China in terms of trade, with the former countries taking China as a trade partner and were in favour of free trade. On the contrary, the latter group—who relied on their textile industries and were facing direct challenge from China's exports—consequently saw China as a competitor, and consequently took a protectionist stance to trade with China. Divergence also appeared in different professions. Manufacturers in southern European countries appealed for the protection of their textile industries, but retailers took an opposing stance as any restrictions on China's exports would reduce their profits.⁵³⁹ Nonetheless, the diverse needs in trade would eventually be integrated under the scheme of the Common Commercial Policy, where the Commission sought to force China to implement its WTO obligations, provide a level and transparent economic environment, and protect Intellectual Property Rights.⁵⁴⁰ To fulfil this objective, the two parties agreed to establish a High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue at the 10th Summit in 2007, and held the first dialogue in Beijing the following year. On trade, the role identities of the two remained that of partners; there was competitiveness in certain areas, but this was kept to a controlled level and both sides agreed to develop their relations in a more positive

⁵³⁷ For instance, it was beneficial for China to “develop its productive capacity”, and for the EU to “promote jobs and growth”, as stated in the EU trade policy paper towards China.

⁵³⁸ Nicola Casarini, “The economic dimension”, in *The evolution of the EU and China relationship: from constructive engagement to strategic partnership*, 11-15.

⁵³⁹ “Europe’s textile war with China—and itself”, *The Economist*, available at <http://www.economist.com/node/4314327>, accessed 13 April 2016.

⁵⁴⁰ “Accompanying COM(2006) 631 final: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities, A policy paper on EU-China trade and investment: Competition and Partnership”, 24 October 2006.

direction. However, the dynamics of the political relations were more intense, and ultimately cast their shadow over the relationship.

In particular, human rights are central to the EU-China political agenda. Ever since the first engagement between the two, the EU expressed its expectation of seeing an improvement in human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in China. In contrast to the US approach, which openly criticises China's human rights record at the UNCHR, the EU adopts a rather more modest approach to engaging with China in this regard. The EU takes the Human Rights Dialogue as the main channel through which to discuss any related narratives, and the Commission initiates programmes to promote the expansion of awareness of human rights, democracy and good governance at the civil society level, such as the EU-China Village Governance Programme.⁵⁴¹ Most importantly, the implementation of these normative projects has been accompanied by the coordination of the Chinese government, and thus could be accepted by Chinese authorities as a constructive approach to engage in human rights. But as time went on, more sceptical and critical voices emerged questioning the constructive engagement policy taken towards China.⁵⁴² In the evaluation of the human rights dialogue and its impact on China's human rights situation, it became clear that China's human rights record had still not met the EU's benchmarks.⁵⁴³

As a normative power, it is in the nature of the EU to pursue normative interests. From the EU's position as an 'investor' in China's human rights record, the EU has allocated considerable resources for its improvement, but has received little in return from the EU's perspective. Subsequently, the EU seemed to have lost patience with China's slow progress, and started adopting a result-oriented approach in its engagement with China, which targeted specific cases and aimed for short-term returns. This change in policy has broken the previous shared knowledge, based on which the two sides agreed to maintain the normative engagement

⁵⁴¹ For the introduction of this programme, see Press Release Database, European Commission, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-96-994_en.htm?locale=en.

⁵⁴² Katinka Barysch, Charles Grant and Mark Leonard, *Embracing the dragon: The EU's partnership with China*, 57-58; John Fox and François Godement, *A Power Audit of EU-China Relations*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 61-63.

⁵⁴³ General Affairs & External Relations Council (GAERC), *Council Conclusions on the EU-China dialogue on human rights*, 11 October 2004, cited in Nicola Casarini, *The evolution of the EU and China relationship: from constructive engagement to strategic partnership*, 20.

through the government, and with a ‘quiet’ approach.⁵⁴⁴ Some EU member states adopted a more critical attitudes towards China’s human rights record and its Tibet and Xinjiang policies, even proposing to boycott the Beijing Olympics. Initially these critiques and protests caused tensions between China and individual countries, but not the EU overall. However, once France took the presidency of the Council in the second half of 2008, the meeting between the Dalai Lama and the then French President Nicolas Sarkozy finally provoked Beijing, resulting in the cancellation of the EU-China Summit in 2008. Political relations lost their coordinated dynamic, thus undermining the channels of communication and leading to the deterioration of the bilateral relationship.

5.3.4.4 Summary

As illustrated in Figure 9, one actor engages with the other and perceives the other’s identity; then, on the basis of this perception, it constructs a corresponding identity. The interests within this identity reflect the nature of this pair of role identities, and then directs each party’s behaviour towards the other. Based on the experience of its previous engagement, the EU sensed that China was increasingly competitive, or even a challenge of commercial trade. Therefore, the EU had to construct a corresponding identity as a competitor to some extent, so that it could play a level game and defend its own interests. As a result of this pair of competing identities, trade disputes occurred.

Perception is significant in the construction of role identity, and is influenced by the actor’s inner characteristics, which is the type identity. As analysed in the last chapter, China is a rising power which aims to adapt the world order in favour of its own rise. Thus, when China perceived the EU’s stance towards multilateralism, it would rather see the EU shifting away from the US and towards the establishment of a multipolar world. Similarly, the EU is a normative power with civilian means, hence when it witnessed China’s reform and open policy and its repaid development, it designed a ‘constructive engagement’ with China, with the wish of seeing dramatic changes at China’s political, economic and societal levels. However, due to the fact that these perceptions are based on the actor’s own type identity, rather than on the genuine nature of their counterpart, misunderstandings are inevitable. These

⁵⁴⁴ Katrin Kinzelbach, *The EU's Human Rights Dialogue with China: quiet diplomacy and its limits*, (London: Routledge, 2015), 95-148.

misunderstandings undermine the shared knowledge, thus the two parties' perceptions could not match, and the role identities based on these perceptions had been easy to be damaged. As a consequence, China did not succeed in pulling the EU away from the influence of the US, and neither did the EU enforce China's accelerated improvement of its standards of human rights and democratic norms. Even though the crack in the shared knowledge did not entirely undermine the relationship, it made both sides extremely critical of each other. The cancellation of the 2008 EU-China Summit seemed to indicate that the bilateral relationship was seriously undermined. However, the change in the external environment—the financial crisis—altered the pattern of the two actors' identities, and created a new element in the relationship.

5.3.5 2009-2012: Reluctant Partners

In the wake of the financial crisis in 2008 and the subsequent debt crisis in Europe, the external environment for the EU and China changed considerably. In order to tackle the economic recession, the EU had to put aside the disputes of the previous phase, and work together with China to extricate itself from of the financial quagmire and regulate the financial governance. In spite of the need to cooperate as partners, there was a certain reluctance in forming this cooperation. Firstly, the EU members were sceptical about China's financial assistance, fearing that China might use its clout to influence their political agendas. Besides, even though the EU was calling on China to take greater international responsibilities, China was reluctant to take on new responsibilities to help the Europeans. Secondly, in terms of regulating financial governance, the shared knowledge of how to operate was limited. Because, ultimately, China represented a different model of political economy, with regards to which China does not share the same type identity as the EU. Hence the role identities between them would not be fully compatible.

5.3.5.1 Context

The onset of the global financial crisis caused a severe deterioration in the EU economy. GDP dropped from €13.1 billion to €12.3 billion, while the growth rate fell to 0.4% in 2008 and even -4.4% in 2009.⁵⁴⁵ The recession also increased unemployment rates, which kept growing in this phase—from 6.76% (first quarter of 2008) to 10.68% (fourth quarter of 2012).⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁵ GDP and main components (nama_10_gdp), Eurostat.

⁵⁴⁶ Unemployment rate, total, % of labour force, OECD data.

Meanwhile, the capacity for consumption expenditure declined by 0.6% in 2009 and 2012, and maintained a low rate of growth during the remaining years (0.9% in 2008 and 2010, and 0.2% in 2011).⁵⁴⁷ For international trade, 2009 was the worst year for the EU: imports dropped by 22.1% and exports dropped by 16.4%, in total, and volume dropped sharply by 19.5%.⁵⁴⁸ As China's most important export destination, the decline of the EU's purchasing capacity partly resulted in the drop of China's export amount, which decreased by 10.2% from 2008 (\$1.50 trillion) to 2009 (\$1.25 trillion).⁵⁴⁹ Given the weight of exports in China's GDP,⁵⁵⁰ the growth of its economy was affected and consequently slowed down, with a fourth quarter 2008 GDP growth (year-on-year basis) of only 6.8%, with the same figure in the first quarter of 2009 of 6.1%, which was the slowest quarterly growth in that decade.⁵⁵¹

Clearly, the crisis created a contradictory atmosphere across the globe. On the one hand, the difficulties of these circumstances were threatening the survival of local industries and employment. Hence a protectionist trend emerged in the governments' policies for stimulating exports and accelerating the recovery.⁵⁵² As discussed in section 5.2.2.1, the external environment has a significant impact on the construction of identities. This atmosphere had partly contributed to inculcating a Hobbesian culture, in which actors tend to pursue their own interests alone, and do not care much for the cooperation, nor the sacrifice, of others. On the other hand, analysts argued that protectionism was not constructive in terms of long-term economic prospects;⁵⁵³ moreover, a common stance had been agreed among world leaders towards an open and anti-protectionist economic environment.⁵⁵⁴ To this extent, the external

⁵⁴⁷ Final consumption aggregates (nama_fcs_k), Eurostat.

⁵⁴⁸ EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat.

⁵⁴⁹ World Development Indicators, World Bank.

⁵⁵⁰ Exports of goods and services shared 31.7% of China's GDP in 2008, data from World Development Indicators, World Bank.

⁵⁵¹ Quarterly Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics of China. Comparison among years/quarters made by China Economic Net, available at http://intl.ce.cn/specials/zxxx/201501/20/t20150120_4389474.shtml.

⁵⁵² Richard Newfarmer and Elisa Gamberoni, "Trade protection: Incipient but worrisome trends", 04 March 2009, available at <http://voxeu.org/article/trade-protection-incipient-worrisome-trends>; Matthieu Bussiere, Emilia Perez-Barreiro, Roland Straub, Daria Taglioni, "Protectionist Responses to the Crisis: Global Trends and Implications", *World Economy* 34, no.5 (2011): 826-52.

⁵⁵³ Sudip Ranjan Basu, Clovis Freire, Pisit Puapan, Vatcharin Sirimaneetham and Yusuke Tateno, "Euro Zone Debt Crisis: Scenario Analysis and Implications for Developing Asia-Pacific", *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 18, no. 1 (2013): 1-25.

⁵⁵⁴ "Declaration of the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy", November 15, 2008, Washington DC, <http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/commission/declarationG20.pdf>. Despite the commitment, however, a series of protectionist measures have still been implemented by several countries, as criticised by Newfarmer and Gamberoni, 2009.

environment seemed less Hobbesian and, the existence of competition notwithstanding, it still seemed to favour liberalism and cooperation. It was this contradictory atmosphere that shaped the intermingled ideas and identities of global actors: countries wished to see investment and assistance from others, but meanwhile set up barriers to protect their domestic economies.

The crisis also brought another important tendency that would affect their identities in international society. Observers demonstrated a shift in the world order, not only a relative increase and decrease in material capacity, but more importantly a shift of the consensus and paradigm.⁵⁵⁵ The Chinese government's performance in resisting the global crisis enhanced Chinese confidence in its political economic model,⁵⁵⁶ which represented a different paradigm in contrast to Western norms.⁵⁵⁷ Along with the success of the 'China model', the decline of Western economic power made many Chinese observers believe that this was the opportunity for China to rise from a subordinate role to that of a more powerful actor.⁵⁵⁸

5.3.5.2 Role identities

Given the discussion above, this shift in power asymmetries and paradigms (or merely the discourse of these paradigms) encouraged China to play a more active role and take on more

⁵⁵⁵ Jonathan Holslag, "The rise of the Beijing consensus", *The Guardian*, 19 April 2009, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/apr/19/beijing-consensus-china-economic>; Dustin R. Turin, "The Beijing Consensus: China's Alternative Development Model", *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse*, (2010) 2(01), available at <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=134>; Howard W. French, "Letter from China: What if Beijing is right?", *The New Yorker Times*, November 02, 2007, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/02/world/asia/02iht-letter.1.8162318.html>.

⁵⁵⁶ Zhang, Weiwei. "一个奇迹的剖析:中国模式及其意义 (Analysis of a miracle: the China model and its significance)", Red Flag Manuscript, (2011) 1(6), 4-7; Li, Junru. "从应对国际金融危机看中国的制度优势 (China's Institutional Advantage in Coping with the International Financial Crisis)", *China Review of Political Economy*, (2010), 1 (2), 23-27; Yandong Wu, "中国模式":探索历程、特点及意义 (China model: exploration, characteristics and significance)", *Theoretical Exploration*, (2009) 2,42-44; Qingwu Wang, "中国道路、中国模式与中国经验 (Chinese Road, Mode and Experience)", *Journal of Jiangsu Administration Institute*, (2009) 3,5-12.

⁵⁵⁷ Shaun Breslin, "The 'China Model' and the Global Crisis: From Friedrich List to a Chinese Mode of Governance?", *International Affairs* 87, no. 6 (2011): 1323-1343; Suisheng Zhao, "The China Model: can it replace the Western model of modernization?", *Journal of contemporary China*, (2010) 19(65), 419-436.

⁵⁵⁸ Examples see, Zhongqi Pan, "从'随势'到'谋势'——有关中国进一步和平发展的战略思考 (China's New Strategy for Peaceful Development: From Tide-Surfing to Tide-Making)", *World Economics and Politics*, (2010) 2, 4-18; Kejin Zhao, "中国崛起与对外战略调整 (China's Rise and Its Foreign Strategic Readjustment)", *Journal of Social Sciences*, (2010) 9,3-11; Yonghui Li, "金融危机、国际新秩序与中国的选择 (Financial Crisis, New International order and the choice of China)", *Contemporary International Relation*, (2009) 4,37-38.

responsibilities.⁵⁵⁹ At the EU-China level, there were good reasons for China to bail out EU members who were suffering amid the crisis. As China's largest export partner, the EU market was significant enough for China to restore its export capability. Moreover, China was seeking alternative currency reserves to US dollars, and clearly buying euro bonds would achieve this purpose⁵⁶⁰ and enhance its profile as a 'responsible long-term investor in European financial market'⁵⁶¹. On the other hand, China hesitated in making a full commitment to aiding the EU.⁵⁶² Beijing seemed to prioritize the promotion of its domestic development, rather than offering large-scale projects to rescue Europe. As the then Premier Wen Jiabao said, as a 'developing country, the good governance of China's own business would be the biggest contribution to the world'.⁵⁶³ This inward looking approach was based on the fact that China still had many domestic economic issues (as discussed in section 4.3.4.1). Moreover, despite the emphasis on the successes of the China Model, the crisis actually exposed the shortcomings of the Chinese system, and highlighted the urgent need to shift to a new growth paradigm.⁵⁶⁴ Consequently, China was caught in a certain dilemma: it was aware of the necessity to assist Europe, whilst facing the need to deal with its own domestic concerns.

The EU was also facing a dilemma. On the one hand, it needed China's aid to escape the crisis, according to Klaus Regling, the head of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), who was sent to Beijing to lobby the Chinese government to contribute to the bail-out fund.⁵⁶⁵ For the EU, China was no longer seen as just a market and a producer, but now also as a key source

⁵⁵⁹ Xueting Yan, Hanxi Chen, Li Deng, "当前国际形势与中国外交的调整 (The Current International Situation and the Adjustment of Chinese Diplomacy)", *Journal of Strategy and Decision-Making*, (2010) 2,3-17; Kaiyin Liang, "论后国际金融危机时期的国际关系与中国的应对之策 (Discuss on the International Relations and China's Countermeasures during the Late Stage of Global Financial Crisis)", *Journal of Hunan University (Social Sciences)*, (2010) 5, 107-112.

⁵⁶⁰ Xinhua, "China backs Europe amid debt crisis", reposted on *China Daily*, 2011-05-10, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-05/10/content_12479687.htm.

⁵⁶¹ "Promising buying European bond for long-term financial investment, Wen Jiabao showed confidence in European economy", *International Financial News*, *People's Daily*, available at <http://finance.people.com.cn/forex/GB/15000967.html>.

⁵⁶² David Pierson and Don Lee, "China appears unlikely to come to Eurozone's rescue", *Los Angeles Times*, November 06, 2011, available at <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/nov/06/business/la-fi-china-europe-20111107>.

⁵⁶³ Xinhua, "Wen Jiabao introducing the domestic and international economic circumstance to the diplomats", *Xinhua Net*, November 08, 2011, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-11/08/c_111153914.htm.

⁵⁶⁴ Shaun Breslin, "The 'China Model' and the Global Crisis: From Friedrich List to a Chinese Mode of Governance?", p.1326; see also Shaun Breslin, "China and the crisis: global power, domestic caution and local initiative", *Contemporary Politics*, (2011) 17 (2),185-200.

⁵⁶⁵ Simon Rabinovitch, "EFSF head optimistic of China's support", *Financial Times*, October 28, 2011, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/0fe3e0c4-012e-11e1-ae24-00144feabdc0>.

of finance and investment. On the other hand, the media and financial observers worried that Chinese financial assistance would come with certain political demands attached⁵⁶⁶, to silence the EU's normative voices⁵⁶⁷, undermine the EU's (and its member states') independence, and manipulate certain member states in regards to others⁵⁶⁸. As a result, part of the EU was cautious and reluctant to accept Chinese capital.

These worries were reinforced by the discussion of the 'China model', or 'Beijing consensus', which implied an alternative to the Western model of development. What the 'China model' meant exactly came under intense discussion,⁵⁶⁹ and there was considerable scepticism as to the definition of its genuine content, but what was clear, and more importantly—as Breslin demonstrated—is 'what China is not and what China does not stand for:

it is not big bang reform and shock therapy; it is not a process where economic liberalization necessarily leads to democratization; it is not jettisoning state control over key sectors; it is not full (neo-) liberalization (particularly in financial sectors); it is not the western way of doing things; it is not following a model or a prescription; it is not being told what to do by others; and it is not telling others what to do'.⁵⁷⁰

In short, there were many divergent elements that were not constructive in building intimate role identities; yet, perhaps, there was no need to build such intimate identities. As previously demonstrated in the last two phases, a rhetorically intimate relationship was vulnerable. What is important is that the two parties be able to recognise each other's pragmatic needs and then cooperate as 'business partners' to tackle any concrete issues.

⁵⁶⁶ Júlia Mező and Beáta Udvari, "Effects of the debt crisis on the EU-China relations", 2012, 440-55, available at <http://www.eco.u-szeged.hu/download.php?docID=40617>.

⁵⁶⁷ Jason Groves, "Silence on human rights...the price Europe must pay for China's billions", *Daily Mail*, 29 October, 2011, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2054929/EU-debt-deal-China-buys-Europes-silence-human-rights.html#ixzz1kYPVYdHH>.

⁵⁶⁸ François Godement, "Saving the euro: what's China's price?", European Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Memo, 29th November, 2011, available at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR45_CHINA_MEMO_AW.pdf.

⁵⁶⁹ Suisheng Zhao, "The China Model: can it replace the Western model of modernization?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 19, no. 65 (2010): 419-436; Barry Naughton, "China's Distinctive System: can it be a model for others?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 19, no. 65 (2010): 437-460; Thomas Ambrosio, "The rise of the 'China Model' and 'Beijing Consensus': evidence of authoritarian diffusion?" *Contemporary Politics*, 18, no. 4 (2012): 381-399; Matt Ferchen, "Whose China Model is it anyway? The contentious search for consensus," *Review of International Political Economy* 20, no. 2 (2013): 390-420.

⁵⁷⁰ Shaun Breslin, "The 'China Model' and the Global Crisis: from Friedrich list to a Chinese mode of governance," 1338-39.

5.3.5.3 Corresponding Interactions

The theme of the ‘reluctant partners’ was that actors cooperate as they see necessary, but they also have their own concerns and initiatives, thus their behaviour can never fully match their counterpart’s expectations. After October 2010, China had been continuously committed to buying the debt of Greece, Spain and Portugal, who were the EU members most affected by the debt crisis.⁵⁷¹ In the first four months of 2011, observers estimated that the proportion of euros in China’s total foreign reserve had raised to 26-28%.⁵⁷² Instead of putting all its resources into buying the bonds, China took the opportunity to invest in European assets. For example, the Chinese shipping group COSCO invested in the Greek port of Piraeus, and the Geely Holding Group bought Volvo. The crisis has changed the roles between China and the EU in terms of investment. Before the crisis, the EU was the larger investor in China, as shown in Figure 13 below. But, after the crisis, China increased its investment in the EU; the scale of the increase was dramatic, and China became the larger investor. In 2009, Chinese investment in the EU jumped from 467 million US dollars to 2967 million, exceeding the EU’s investment in China in 2010 by 394 million dollars. China’s preference towards assets rather than bonds was not what the EU had expected, and the vast scale of buying raised concerns over the investments themselves,⁵⁷³ as it was feared that in the change in investment strategy, the EU members would lose their stances in normative narratives and the coherence in their political agendas.⁵⁷⁴

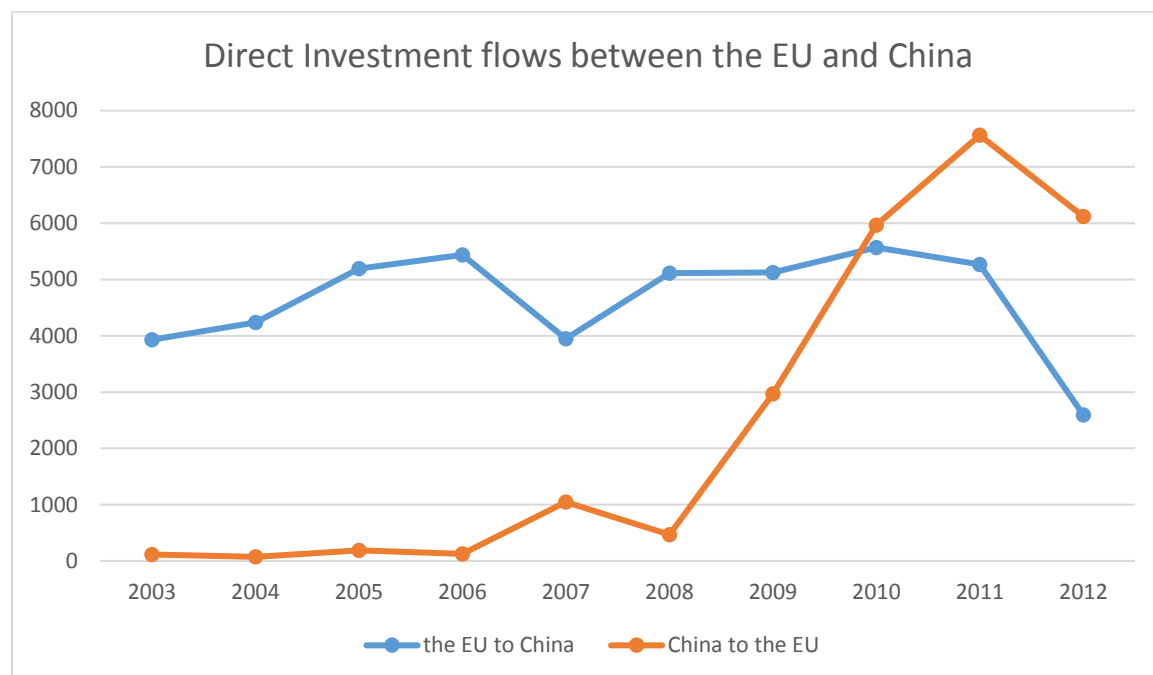
⁵⁷¹ “China’s Wen offers to buy Greek debt”, Reuters, October 2, 2010, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-china-idUSTRE69112L20101002>; “China to buy 6 billion euros of Spanish debt: report”, Reuters, January 6, 2011, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-debt-idUSTRE7051NE20110106>; “China buys Portuguese sovereign debt”, Portugal Resident, January 14, 2011, available at <http://portugalresident.com/china-buys-portuguese-sovereign-debt>.

⁵⁷² Nicola Casarini, “How the debt crisis can advance Sino-European relations”, European Union Institution for Security Studies, 27 September 2011, available at <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/how-the-debt-crisis-can-advance-sino-european-relations/>.

⁵⁷³ François Godement, Jonas Parelló-Plesner and Alice Richard, “The Scramble for Europe”, European Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Brief, July 2011, available at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR37_Scramble_For_Europe_AW_v4.pdf.

⁵⁷⁴ Odd Arne Westad, “China and Europe: Opportunities or Dangers?” available at <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR013/SR013-Eu-westad.pdf>.

Figure 13. Bilateral direct investment flows between the EU and China from 2003 to 2012



Series: direct investment flows (Millions of US dollars)

Source: Bilateral FDI Statistics, United Nations conference on Trade and Development.

Clearly, the two parties' attitudes towards investment was different. China had committed itself to contribute to bailing out the EU, but had no intention of merely putting their capital into a vague financial market. The EU had various reasons to be reluctant about Chinese investment, but nonetheless accepting it was the rational option. To be fair, despite the reluctance and concerns, at least both sides obtained something they had wished for.

In terms of financial governance, the EU and China shared common identities in regulating financial mechanisms at the global level, and enhancing the stability of the international financial regime.⁵⁷⁵ However, different from the EU, which had a rules/norms-based orientation, China had greater ambition towards gaining a higher position and a more relevant role in the international institutions, so that it could better reflect its economic weight and its responsibilities. As discussed in 3.2.1, Chapter 3, China's rising power identity implied that it felt the need to (re)shape the international order into a fashion that best suited its interests.

⁵⁷⁵ Ramon Pacheco Pardo, "EU-China relations in financial governance: cooperation, convergence or competition?" *Asia Europe Journal*, 12, no. 1-2 (2014): 63-77.

Meanwhile, instead of being a late-coming player which obeys the existing rules, China was being more proactive in building innovative institutions from an otherwise Western-dominated pattern. For instance, China, along with the other BRICS countries, proposed the establishment of the New Development Bank in 2012. Once again, convergence and divergence co-existed in the EU's and China's behaviour. These characteristics reflected the nature of their role identities as 'reluctant partners'. Despite the respective diverging dimensions of their policies, they managed to find a compatible channel to program cooperation.

5.3.5.4 Summary

EU-China relations had further matured during this phase. Having gone through the last two phases, there was good evidence that intimate rhetoric would not help to maintain any long-lasting cooperative relationship, but neither could the divergence undermine the foundations of such cooperation. Their previous engagements had equipped the two parties with a deeper understanding of each other's qualities. Based on these understandings, they had constructed the role identity of 'reluctant partners'. The nature of this pair of identities does not suggest to us to focus on what they *did not want* to do, but what they actually *did* (in spite of their reluctance). Furthermore, instead of instructing their counterparts as what they should do, they accepted the strategies of what they *had* to do, and what they *could* do. In this phase, the external environment aroused their realization of the need for cooperation, and reluctance prevented them from setting overly high expectations for each other. Both ultimately combined together to shape their relationship.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the historical development of the EU-China relationship. Firstly, it introduced the notion of 'role identity', which is the core concept that has been studied in this chapter. In addition, it has also demonstrated the relationship between role identity and other conventional theories, such as the role theory and image theory in Foreign Policy Analysis. Then, it outlined the analytical structure of identity-interest-interaction, within which the dynamics between actors would be analysed. Furthermore, 'perception' has been designated as a critical factor in testing the nature of the role identity, and the means to connect role identity with type identity. Moreover, this chapter has clarified the links between shared knowledge and concepts of perception and social learning.

The core argument in this chapter is that role identity is the key factor in influencing the development of the relationship. In the process of analysis, we can find various elements that could impose certain impacts on the relationship. For instance, the transformative nature of the external environment, the preferences of their domestic needs, interactive mechanisms, the modes of behaviours and so forth., but it would be extremely limited to study these elements separately. In contrast, role identity connects the nature of the external environment and the inner characteristics of the actors, and also reflects their perceptions of each other. Therefore, it provides an integrated approach to understand how the structure of the role identities determines the quality of the relationship.

The reason for this historical review is that a bilateral relationship is a dynamic subject, thus the period of observation should be extended in order to gain a comprehensive understanding. As stated in the analysis frame (Figure 9), there is a process of feedback after the initial mutual engagement and, consequently, one phase is obviously not sufficient to understand the transformation of identities and relations. Moreover, it is the very feedback received from the above that encourages the transition of the relationship through the review of the combination of multiple phases. So one can gain a continuously updated picture of how and why the identity varies, as well as the relevant changes in relationship. In reviewing the five phases, one thing that should not be neglected is the function of type identity. Chapter 4 has demonstrated type identities of the EU and China, which includes their inner characteristics and shapes their patterns of perceiving others. In this chapter, type identity was shown to be influential in constructing role identities and shaping the preferences of actors. For instance, the compatibility in economic type identities shapes the foundation for the role identity as partners. At the same time, the different structure of the economy could also generate a competitive atmosphere. The type identity of a rising power encourages China to seek reforms in the global order, and thus approach the EU in terms of seeking the multipolarisation of the international society; further, the EU's normative identity drives it to place narratives of human rights and democracy on the bilateral agenda. However, due to the different type identities in political regimes and values, the two parties could not stand on the same side. To understand the EU-China relationship, we need to consider the questions of 'what they are' and 'what they are to

each other', where the combination of Chapter 3 and 4 is designed to answer these questions, and to present a comprehensive picture of their relations.

The following chapter provides a case study on the campaign surrounding the arms embargo. Even though a relatively long period is required to outline the transition of identities, there is a case within which we can witness the clash of the various identities involved. The arms embargo has been mentioned several times in this chapter, and this narrative will now be expanded into a detailed framework in order to explore how diverse identities function in a specific case.

Chapter 6. EU-China relations on the arms embargo: clash of identities

6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have discussed the type identities and role identities of the EU and China. Type identities demonstrate the actors' inner qualities, which explain their characteristics and preferences. Role identities outline the dynamics between actors, and illustrate their behavioural patterns within the relevant dynamics. With the combination of these two identities, we can understand what the EU and China 'are', and how they perceive each other. These two aspects in turn can reveal the characteristics of the EU-China relationship and show how it is influenced by identities.

This previous discussion explained the mechanism by which the identities influence the actors' interests and behaviours, and has therefore built a comprehensive foundation for the case study. Given the respective explorations of type identity and role identity, it is incumbent on us to integrate them in a single case. Instead of demonstrating the identities in different domains (chapter 3) and phases (chapter 4), this chapter aims to combine them in one specific case study. By analysing the actors' identities, this case study is designed to explore the causal connections between identities and behaviours, and thereby explain how identity influences the EU-China relationship.

In order to accomplish this purpose, this chapter will apply the case study of the EU-China arms embargo negotiation. The EU had placed a ban on military sales to China as a response to Tiananmen events in 1989. This sanction remained untouched until 2003 when China proposed it be lifted. This proposal became the subject of intensive discussion among the EU institutions, member states, and on the transatlantic stage. Finally, the negotiation was postponed in 2005, and the embargo remained in place.

This case has provided various sources of identities to analyse. It does not only concern commercial trade (the identities of partners), but is also related to strategic aspects in terms of

the relationships with the US (triangle identities), and to the normative principles that are upheld by the EU and its member states (normative identities). Therefore, such a group of diverse identities constructs a stage where we can concentrate all kinds of identities into a single case for analysis. The clash of these identities reveals a comprehensive picture that aids our understanding how they influence actors' behaviour.

This chapter will firstly introduce the research methods, which aims to embody a quantitative analysis on 141 Chinese language sources, and to show how they contribute to understating of Chinese perceptions and motivations. Such a quantitative text analysis on abundant Chinese language literatures has not been done before and thus is a unique contribution to studies of EU-China relations. It will then give a chronology of the campaign for arms embargo, which aims to present a clear outline of this event. The main structure consists of three questions: 1) how did the proposal for lifting the embargo come about? 2) How was it discussed? 3) Why, ultimately, was the embargo was not lifted? These questions are designed to examine the connections between identities and behaviours—how did the identities trigger the proposal, how did they shape the form of discussion, and how did they result in the maintenance of the embargo. The findings of these questions will contribute to support this thesis's argument that identity plays a decisive role in the interaction between actors. Meanwhile, at each key stages of the embargo debate, the analysis will give extra explanation to actors' motivation in deploying new polices. For instance, why did China pass the Anti-Secession Law while the EU was trying to lift the embargo?

The identities that will be analysed in this chapter consist of type identities and role identities. Despite the comprehensive illustration completed in chapter 3 and 4, not all the identities in the previous work will be incorporated in this chapter, but only those that are relevant to this case. For instance, the type identities that have been selected are the EU's identity as a normative power and China's identity as a rising power because they can serve to help understand the proposal and discussion. In addition, the context for analysing role identities has been broadened into a triangle context that involves the US, because the US played a critical role in this case, and it is important to examine what the EU and China's identities are in relation to the US, and what their interests and behaviours would be. After the analysis of the embargo, this chapter will make a comparison between conventional theories and the

constructivist approach, which aims to provide a link back to the ideas discussed in chapter 3, and to show both the contribution of conventional theories and the value added by the Constructivist approach.

6.2 Analytical methods

Case Study

As a social science methodology, case study is ideal for such a holistic and in-depth investigation.⁵⁷⁶ Yin summarised three purposes to case study—exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.⁵⁷⁷ In this chapter, describing the process of the case is the mean but not the purpose; the purpose is to explain how and why an actor's behaviour is determined by its identities and therefore, to some extent, this is an explanatory case study. Through this explanatory analysis, the final purpose was to confirm my argument that it is identity that plays a decisive role in the interactions between actors.

To build a strong foundation for the case study, this chapter is rigorously informed by appropriate materials, including personal interviews, academic literatures, media news, official papers and figures from databases. These materials have served to provide a comprehensive understanding of the arms embargo case. By collecting and integrating the plentiful sources available from the news, governmental reports and other online information about China, the EU and the US, this chapter describes a clear picture of the perceptions of each side. Special credit is given to WikiLeaks, who revealed various information that were hidden by the governments and difficult to find from other online sources, and the acquisition of this information helped to build penetrating understandings of the thoughts of many actors in the arms embargo campaign.

⁵⁷⁶ Joe Feagin, Anthony Orum, and Gideon Sjoberg, eds., *A Case for the Case Study* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 2.

⁵⁷⁷ Robert Yin, *Case study research: design and methods* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2009), 7.

Quantitative analysis

More importantly, different from previous remarkable studies of this case,⁵⁷⁸ which had access to extensive information describing the Western perspective, this chapter is based on the analysis of 141 (after filtering) Chinese language literatures that were collected from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), which is the largest database for Chinese academic resources. The author has mainly selected articles with title and key words of a) ‘EU-China relations’, b) ‘EU-US relations’, which also includes key words such as ‘US’, ‘EU/European Union’ and transatlantic relations⁵⁷⁹, and c) ‘China-US relations’⁵⁸⁰. In the process of collecting, the author has filtered out irrelevant articles which are non-academic materials,⁵⁸¹ and which discuss specific topics that are not this chapter’s focus (e.g. details on trade negotiation and technological cooperation).

In order to develop a clear understanding of Chinese perceptions of the EU and the US, this chapter will take a qualitative analysis of the content of these Chinese literatures which will show the extent to which China perceived the EU as a partner or something else. Furthermore, the extent to which these Chinese academic materials can represent China’s perception might be questioned. As discussed in section 2.2.3.3 regarding think tanks, Chinese academia has a special position in China’s foreign policy making: it does not only propose suggestions up to relevant ministries, but can also sense the atmosphere of the high-level policy-making circle, and accordingly works as advocates of such atmosphere or policies. Therefore, it is worth taking an in-depth investigation of these Chinese language literatures, which has not been seen in any other studies on the EU-China arms embargo before. This approach will provide a unique contribution to evidential illustration of the Chinese perceptions of the EU and the US.

⁵⁷⁸ For instance, Nicola Casarini, “The International Politics of the Chinese Arms Embargo Issue”; Terry Narramore, “China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy”; Tang Shao Cheng, “The EU’s Policy towards China and the Arms Embargo”, 313-321.

⁵⁷⁹ Articles refer to particular “transatlantic relations’ between the UK and US have been filtered out.

⁵⁸⁰ There is a much larger number (about 2775) of articles under this search, but many of them are not relevant to the EU. Only 13 articles have been selected as they also have “EU” or “European Union” in their key words.

⁵⁸¹ They are, for example, conference reviews, non-academic magazine articles, and media reports.

6.3 Chronology of the arms embargo negotiation

It is necessary to introduce the timeline of the campaign the of arms embargo before proceeding to its analysis. In October 2003, China issued its first policy paper on the EU, and proposed to the EU that it lift the arms embargo on China. On their meeting of December 2003, the European Council agreed to investigate the feasibility of lifting the embargo. As a response, the US weighed in to oppose this action.

During the process of the investigation, the European Parliament and various EU member states also opposed the lifting of the embargo, citing China's human rights record. Until the 7th EU-China Summit in December 2004, the EU still could not make a decision as to whether to lift the embargo, but confirmed its will to work *towards* lifting it. Meanwhile, the US imposed more intensive pressure on the EU to stop it lifting the embargo. In addition to the concerns over China's human rights record, the US further argued that the elimination of the embargo would break the East Asian military balance and endanger the allies' forces in that region.

On 14 March 2005, China passed the Anti-Secession Law, which completely changed the dynamic in the campaign. In the next European Council meeting in June, the arms embargo issue was not even mentioned. The campaign was postponed, and the arms embargo remained in place. The details of the process are listed below and the events that happened during the process will be analysed in the following sections.

Table 6. The Chronology of the EU-China arms embargo

EU-China Arms Embargo Chronology		
2003	October	China proposed the lifting of the arms embargo in its first policy paper on the EU. ⁵⁸²
2003	1 December	German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, on his visit to Beijing,

⁵⁸² Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union, *China's policy paper on EU*, 13 October 2003, available at <http://www.chinamission.be/eng/zywj/zywd/t1227623.htm> (accessed 9 October 2016).

		promised to push inside the EU for an end to the embargo. ⁵⁸³
2003	12 December	In the European Council meeting, the European Council invites the General Affairs and External Relations Council to re-examine the question of the embargo on the sale of arms to China. ⁵⁸⁴
2003	18 December	The European Parliament (EP) called on the Council and the Member States not to lift the arms embargo on China. ⁵⁸⁵
2004	26 January	On the Council meeting for external relations, the Council responded to the European Council's request above, and referred this issue to the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) for further investigation and discussion. ⁵⁸⁶
2004	28 January	During Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to France, French President Jacques Chirac admitted 'the arms embargo on China makes no more sense today', and urged the EU to lift the ban. ⁵⁸⁷
2004	31 January	The US government formally protested to the EU and its members states in an attempt to prevent the lifting of the embargo. ⁵⁸⁸
2004	5 February	The Chinese media reported that Javier Solana, the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, said 'the EU is ready to lift the arms embargo on China'. ⁵⁸⁹
2004	14 April	Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, indicated that it is unlikely the embargo would be lifted in the immediate future,

⁵⁸³ Lisbeth Kirk, "Schröder wants to lift arms embargo against China", *EUobserver*, 1 December 2003, available at <https://euobserver.com/news/13742> (accessed 9 October 2016).

⁵⁸⁴ European Council, "Presidency Conclusions", DOC/03/5, 12 December 2003, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_DOC-03-5_en.htm (accessed 16 October 2013).

⁵⁸⁵ European Parliament, "Removal of the EU embargo on arms sales to China", European Parliament resolution on arms sales to China, P5_TA(2003)0599, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P5-TA-2003-0599+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN> (accessed 9 October 2016).

⁵⁸⁶ European Commission, "2559th Council meeting - External Relations", 5519/04 (Presse 26), Brussels, 26 January 2004, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-04-26_en.htm (accessed 9 October 2016).

⁵⁸⁷ China Internet Information Center, "Arms Embargo on China Makes No More Sense: Chirac", *Xinhua News Agency*, January 28, 2004, available at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/phfnt/85597.htm> (accessed 9 October 2016).

⁵⁸⁸ Philip Pan, "U.S. Pressing EU to Uphold Arms Embargo Against China; Rights Abuses, Security Cited; France, Germany Back Beijing", *The Washington Post* via *Factiva*, WP00000020040131e01v0001o, 31 January 2004, (accessed 10 October 2016).

⁵⁸⁹ Agencies, "Solana: EU ready to lift China arms embargo", *China Daily*, 5 February 2004, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2004-02/05/content_303405.htm (accessed 10 October 2016).

		as China's progress in terms of human rights was not satisfactory to the EU. ⁵⁹⁰
2004	26/27 April	With the awareness of the current positive trend of EU-China relations, the Council insisted that arms embargo should be linked with the Chinese human rights record. The two Committees (Coreper and PSC) were instructed to continue their discussions on this issue. ⁵⁹¹
2004	3 May	Chinese Premier Minister Wen Jiabao called on the EU to lift the arms embargo during his visit to Europe. ⁵⁹²
2004	17/18 June	In the European Council Meeting, the European Council invites the Council to continue its consideration of the arms embargo in the context of the EU's overall relations with China. ⁵⁹³
2004	8 October	French President Chirac repeated his position to lift the arms embargo before his visit to China. ⁵⁹⁴
2004	17 November	The EP reaffirmed its stance that the arms embargo should be maintained unless China provided substantial evidence of the improvement in its human rights record. ⁵⁹⁵
2004	8 December	In the 7 th EU-China Summit, the EU confirmed its political will to continue to work towards lifting the embargo, the Chinese side welcomed this positive signal. ⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁰ Sharon Spiteri, "Prompt lifting of Chinese arms embargo improbable, says Prodi", *EUobserver*, 14 April 2004, available at <https://euobserver.com/foreign/15145>. (accessed 10 October 2016).

⁵⁹¹ European Commission, "2577th Council meeting - External Relations", 8567/04 (Presse 116), Luxembourg, 26 and 27 April 2004, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-04-116_en.htm?locale=en (accessed 10 October 2016)

⁵⁹² John Moylan, "China calls for end to arms ban", *BBC News*, 7 May 2004, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3688861.stm> (accessed 10 October 2016).

⁵⁹³ Council of the European Union, *Brussels European Council 17 and 18 June 2004 Presidency Conclusions*, 10679/2/04 REV 2, Brussels, 19 June 2004, available at <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10679-2004-REV-2/en/pdf> (accessed 10 October 2016)

⁵⁹⁴ "France urges lifting of EU arms embargo against China", *Euractiv*, 8 October 2004, available at <https://www.euractiv.com/section/security/news/france-urges-lifting-of-eu-arms-embargo-against-china/> (accessed 10 October 2016).

⁵⁹⁵ European Parliament, "Arms Exports, European Parliament resolution on the Council's Fifth Annual Report according to Operative Provision 8 of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (2004/2103(INI))", P6_TA(2004)0058, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P6-2004-0058+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN> (accessed 10 October 2016).

⁵⁹⁶ Council of the European Union, "Joint Statement, 7th EU-China Summit, The Hague", 15065/04 (Presse 337), 8 December 2004, available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/82998.pdf (accessed 10 October 2016).

2005	9 February	US Secretary Condoleezza Rice warned that lifting the embargo would send the wrong signal to China in terms of human rights, and would break the military balance in East Asia. ⁵⁹⁷
2005	22 February	US President George W. Bush raised US concerns during his visit to Europe, and reiterated the US opposition to lifting the embargo. ⁵⁹⁸
2005	14 March	The EU sent a delegation led by Annalisa Giannella to Washington to explain the mechanism and assure the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct, in order to ease the US's concern and ask for accommodation. ⁵⁹⁹
2005	14 March	China passed the Anti-Secession Law, which implied the use of force if Taiwan went for independence.
2005	21 March	The EP called on the Council not to lift the embargo as there had been little progress made in terms of Chinese human rights and democracy. ⁶⁰⁰
2005	16/17 June	The issue of the arms embargo did not appear in the agenda of the European Council meeting in June.

6.4 How did the proposal come out?

The arms embargo is one of the sanctions that was imposed on China in 1989 in the wake of the Tiananmen events. In that summer, West Europe was appalled by what happened in Tiananmen Square, and the subsequent response was fiercely condemnatory. As demonstrated in Section 4.3.2 in Chapter 4, the European Communities, including its member states, censured China for violating democracy and human rights. As a consequence, in the European Council meeting in Madrid held on 27 June 1989, the twelve member states issued a collective

⁵⁹⁷ Secretary Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks With European Commission President Josi Manuel Barroso and European Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner After Their Meeting", Berlaymount Building, Brussels, Belgium, 9 February 2005, Archive, U.S. Department of State, available at <https://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/42072.htm> (assessed 10 October 2016).

⁵⁹⁸ "Bush Voices Concern on Plan to Lift China Arms Embargo", *The New York Times*, 22 February 2005, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/22/international/europe/bush-voices-concern-on-plan-to-lift-china-arms-embargo.html> (assessed 10 October 2016).

⁵⁹⁹ Guy Dinmore, "EU fails to sway US on China arms ban", *Financial Times*, 15 March 2005, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/6bc7f458-9582-11d9-bc72-00000e2511c8> (assessed 10 October 2016).

⁶⁰⁰ Elmar Brok, "Report on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the European Communities – 2003 (8412/2004 - 2004/2172(INI))", Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament, FINAL A6-0062/2005, 21 March 2005, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2005-0062+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN> (assessed 10 October 2016).

declaration condemning China, and imposed a series of sanctions on China.⁶⁰¹ Most of the sanctions were lifted in the early 1990s, but the arms embargo remained in place.

The EU-China relationship had been improving since the 1990s, as commercial trade enlarged, communication channels expanded, and the political ties intensified. The EU welcomed China's reform and open policy, which changed its conservative image and allowed China to integrate itself into international society. China valued the EU's role as an exports destination and a source of technology, and also the EU's efforts to promote multilateralism. In the sense of mutual appreciation, in 2003, the relations between the EU and China peaked, when they both issued policy papers directed towards each other, and elevated their relationship to the level of 'strategic partnership', the EU calling China a maturing partner.⁶⁰²

It is this 'maturing partnership' that defined the role identities between the EU and China (as described in Section 4.3.3, Chapter 4), and under the structure of these role identities, the two parties started the campaign to lift the arms embargo.

In addition, the role of the identities of the EU and China in a triangle relationship including the US need to be examined. Why did China propose lifting the embargo at this time (2003)? Why did China proposed to the EU to lift the embargo, rather than the US? What qualities did China see in the EU that they decided to attempt this campaign? To sum up, exploring 'what is the EU when it is connected to the US?' is a crucial question to answer - and this crucial question will be asked repeatedly in every section of this chapter.

6.4.1 Maturing Partners

The proposal for lifting the arms embargo was a reasonable and logical action in the dynamic of 'maturing partners'. As described in Section 4.3.3, Chapter 4, the role identities of the EU and China in 2003-2004 were those of 'maturing partners', which implies that the relationship

⁶⁰¹ European Council, "Annex II Declaration on China", Presidency Conclusion, SN254/2/89, Madrid, 26-27 June 1989.

⁶⁰² European Commission, "A maturing partnership - shared interests and challenges in EU-China relations (Updating the European Commission's Communications on EU-China relations of 1998 and 2001)", 10 September 2003, COM/2003/ 533 final.

was ready, or about to be ready for ‘picking fruit’. Since the EU issued its first policy paper towards China in 1995, bilateral relations had experienced impressive progress. In 2003, the EU and China agreed to launch the ‘comprehensive strategic partnership’ as both sides were satisfied with their cooperation and their achievements were being ‘fruitful’,⁶⁰³ and the relationship was ‘rapidly maturing’ in this context.⁶⁰⁴ Therefore, it seemed that it was time for China and the EU to solve the arms embargo issue, the resolution of this problem being a logical result of the current state of development in the relationship, and also an opportunity to push the relationship forward.

Commercial ties, among all the relations, have evidenced the most obvious and considerable achievements in the EU-China relationship. The trade volume was 136.2 billion Euros in 2003, and EU imports from China totalled 95.8 billion Euros, whilst exports reached 40.4 billion Euros. This scale of trade made China the EU’s second largest trading partner and source of imports in 2003, and similarly the EU was China’s third largest partner. Along with the improving dynamic of the relationship, bilateral trade enjoyed a bounce in 2004, the total trade amount rose by 29% to 175.7 billion Euros, while imports rose by 33.1% to 127.5 billion Euros and exports rose by 19.3% to 48.2 billion Euros. As a result, the EU has replaced the US as China’s biggest trading partner from 2004 onwards, and China also displaced the US as the EU’s most important source of imports in 2006.⁶⁰⁵ This atmosphere boosted bulk commercial agreements, particularly during the mutual state visits. For instance, China bought 21 Airbus series aircraft, when President Hu Jintao visited Paris⁶⁰⁶ and when French President Jacques Chirac visited Beijing, they signed 1.25 billion US dollars’ worth of contracts, including deals with Alstom and Airbus.⁶⁰⁷ These intensified economic ties provided a harmonious dynamic for the EU and China to promote cooperation in other realms.

⁶⁰³ Council of the European Union, “Sixth China-EU Summit, Beijing, 30 October 2003, Joint Press Statement”, Brussels, 30 October 2003, 13424/03 (Presse 298), available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/77802.pdf (assessed 12 October 2016).

⁶⁰⁴ Council of the European Union, “7th EU-China Summit, The Hague, 8 December 2004, Joint Statement”, Brussels, 8 December 2004, 15065/04 (Presse 337), available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/82998.pdf (assessed 12 October 2016).

⁶⁰⁵ EU trade since 1988 by SITC (DS-018995), Eurostat.

⁶⁰⁶ Xinhua and Agencies, “President’s state visit to France”, *China Daily*, 27 January 2004, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2004-01/27/content_301177.htm (assessed 12 October 2016).

⁶⁰⁷ “Chirac welcomes China trade deals”, *BBC News*, 11 October 2004, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3728586.stm> (assessed 12 October 2016).

The EU and China signed diverse agreements that covered cooperation ranging from technology to maritime transport, from tourism to environment. A remarkable achievement was the cooperative research on the Galileo navigation program, which demonstrated a new sphere where the EU and China could achieve collaboration. This joint project was particularly significant in that the EU acquired access to China's aerospace market, which was estimated by the EU as more demanding and promising than those of the US and EU.⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, such cooperation in a high-technology area reflected the well-built diplomatic relationship and the mutual trust at the political level,⁶⁰⁹ and contributed a 'strategic component' to the content of the comprehensive strategic relationship.⁶¹⁰

These agreements and cooperation conform to the EU's strategy on China: the constructive engagement adopted since 1995 aimed to engage China in realms ranging from the economy, politics, and society to global and regional security, and even possibly to military channels. The EU planned to lead China towards increased involvement in international affairs and become a responsible actor who could also embrace the EU's norms such as human rights and democracy.⁶¹¹ In this context, China's profile at the international stage since 1995 was supported and appreciated by the EU, which also encouraged the EU's confidence in the constructive engagement policy.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁸ The European Advisory Group on Aerospace, *STAR21 - Strategic Aerospace Review for the 21st Century. Creating a coherent market and policy framework for a vital European industry*, European Commission, Enterprise publications, July 2002, 19.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. and "中欧伽利略计划合作 (Sino-European Cooperation on Galileo Program)", National Remote Sensing Centre of China, 26 April 2012, available at http://www.nrscc.gov.cn/nrscc/gjhz/zojlljhhz/201204/t20120426_30724.html (assessed 13 October 2016).

⁶¹⁰ "Opening of EU-China negotiations on satellite navigation, Remarks by François Lamoureux, Director-General DG Energy and Transport", Brussels, 16 May 2003, available at <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/opening-of-eu-china-negotiations-on-satellite-navigation-remarks-by-franois-lamoureux-director-general-dg-energy-and-transport/176678.article>. (assessed 13 October 2016).

⁶¹¹ European Commission, "A long term policy for China-Europe relations", Brussels, 05.07.1995, COM(1995) 279 final.

⁶¹² European Commission, "Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China", Brussels, 25.03.1998, COM(1998) 181 final.

As a result, it was reasonable for the EU to continue this constructive engagement with China, and given their role identities as ‘maturing partners’, it was also logical to expand and deepen the bilateral collaboration in other areas.

The agreement on the joint Galileo program—a dual-use project that was suitable for both civilian and military purposes— implied that the security and military sector was not a forbidden zone. Consequently, the arms embargo became a topic that could be touched and would contribute to ‘give further meaning and content to this newly established strategic partnership’.⁶¹³ For China, the arms embargo was political discrimination, but the harmonious dynamic presented an appropriate opportunity to resolve the problem. For the EU, lifting the embargo did not necessarily entail profits in arms sales, but implied a further, closer relationship with China that might contain potential large contracts, increased access to the Chinese market, and profits in other commercial spheres. This will be further discussed in the next section, but here it is only important to understand the reasonable logic behind the proposal for lifting.

6.4.2 The EU was different from the US in China’s eyes

China perceived the EU differently from the US in terms of its strategic outlook. This perception convinced China that the EU had similar understandings as China on the international order, and brought the EU closer to China in its national strategy. Furthermore, it also influenced China’s judgement on the EU’s willingness (but not the capability) to work together with China on certain issues such as lifting the embargo.

The EU held a multilateralist stance, which was largely different from US unilateralism under George W. Bush (Jr)’s administration. This difference was exposed by the Iraq War, the European states, especially the major powers like France and Germany, publicly opposed the US unilateralist approach in this war.⁶¹⁴ But there were also supportive voices expressed in the

⁶¹³ Nicola Casarini, “The International Politics of the Chinese Arms Embargo Issue”, 372.

⁶¹⁴ “EU allies unite against Iraq war”, *BBC News*, 22 January 2003, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2683409.stm>; “France and Germany unite against Iraq war”, *The Guardian*, 22 January 2003, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jan/22/germany.france>. (accessed 15 October 2016).

UK, Spain, Italy and Eastern European countries,⁶¹⁵ and consequently Europe was divided—as remarked by the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld—into ‘old Europe’ such as France and Germany, and ‘new Europe’ such as Eastern European countries who were in accord with the US.⁶¹⁶ This divergence among member states was reflected at the EU level and generated a blurred stance. The European Council held an extraordinary meeting to consider the Iraq issue in February 2003, with the presence of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox. The conclusion of the meeting did not directly criticize the US’s military action, but reiterated its position to resolve the Iraq crisis under the UN’s framework and through multilateral collaboration with the Arab countries.⁶¹⁷ Because of the existence of two sides in the meeting, the conclusion was more like a compromise of the two stances, but in the interview with the High Representative Javier Solana by the Chinese media, he agreed with the Chinese comment that too much unilateralism happened in 2003, and therefore he was glad to welcome the multilateral diplomacy.⁶¹⁸

The EU’s advocacy for multilateralism and France’s and Germany’s criticism on the US’s unilateralism has been perceived by China as an opportunity to attempt some form of breakthrough in the EU-China strategic relationship. In China’s diplomatic policy, European states had long been considered as forces that could be united with China to deal with the most threatening opponents. This strategy was first applied by Zhou Enlai at the Geneva Conference in 1954, when the Chinese delegation noticed the different stances within the West bloc, and used them to play the Western bloc off against the US.⁶¹⁹ In 1970s, China’s foreign policy was

⁶¹⁵ Juegen Schuster and Herbert Maier, “The Rift: Explaining Europe’s Divergent Iraq Policies in the Run-Up of the American-Led War on Iraq”, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2, no. 3 (2006): 223-244.

⁶¹⁶ “Outrage at ‘old Europe’ remarks”, *BBC News*, 23 January 2003, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2687403.stm> (assessed 15 October 2016)

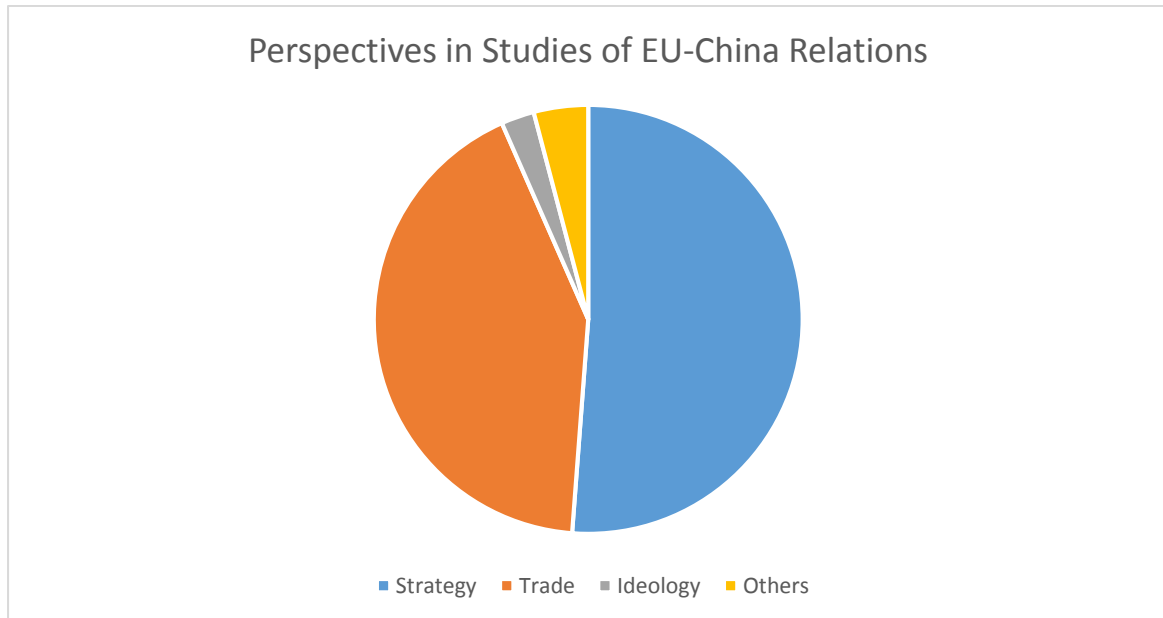
⁶¹⁷ Council of the European Union, “Extraordinary European Council, Brussels, 6466/03”, 21 February 2003, available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/74554.pdf (assessed 16 October 2016)

⁶¹⁸ Council of the European Union, “EU and China, strategic partners with global objectives: Interview”, Interview of HR Javier Solana published by *People’s Daily Online (China)*, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/sg/hr_int/79739.pdf (assessed 18 October 2016).

⁶¹⁹ ““Preliminary Opinions on the Assessment of and Preparation for the Geneva Conference,” Prepared by the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (drafted by PRC Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai) [Excerpt],” March 02, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 206-Y0054, Wilson Center, translated by Chen Zhihong, available at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111963> (assessed 8 March 2017); Zhai Qiang, “China and the Geneva Conference of 1954”, *The China Quarterly* 129, (1992) 129: 103–122.

directed by the ‘Three World Theory’, hence the European states were perceived as potential allies to balance the Soviet Union’s power in Eurasia.⁶²⁰

Figure 14. Perspectives in Studies of EU-China relations



In the post-Cold War era, the EU’s development in regional integration and its principle of multilateralism were endorsed by a large amount of Chinese observers. Between 1992 and 2004,⁶²¹ there were 121 articles that studied EU-China relations, and 62 of them (51.2%) had analysed from a strategic perspective, whilst the others analysed from perspectives of trade (42.2%), ideology (2.5%) and others such as cooperation in technology and legislation (4.1%), as shown in Figure 14 above. This figure illustrates that strategic relationship was the most important perspective in studies of EU-China relations, and also that this was one of the EU’s biggest value when Chinese observers tried to place the EU in China’s grand strategy. These 62 articles were identified because they emphasised the EU’s impact on the international system by using the narratives of ‘multipolarity’ or ‘multipolarisation’. It was widely believed

⁶²⁰ See 5.3.1.1 in chapter 5.

⁶²¹ It starts from 1992 as we explore the studies of EU-China relations in the post-Cold War era. It ends in 2004 because the embargo was decided to remain in 2005, so the perceptions might change after that.

and expected that the EU had the potential to be an independent pole to promote multipolarity and thus constrain US power.⁶²²

⁶²² Dai Bingran, “中欧关系的回顾与展望 (The review and prospect of China-EU relations),” *World Economic Forum* 1 (1995): 26-28; Feng Zhongping, “中欧长期合作关系的基石——欧盟公布对华新政策 (The pillar for the long term cooperation between China and EU—the EU issues the new policy on China),” *World Affairs* 16 (1995): 6-7; Zhang Xiaoli, “中、欧双边合作关系的新阶段——简述欧盟对华长期政策 (New phase for bilateral cooperation between China and the EU—analysing the EU’s long term policy on China),” *Foreign Affairs Review* 4 (1995): 38-62; Dai Bingran, “中国——欧盟关系战略基础初探 (Analysing the strategic basis for China-EU relations),” *World Economics and Politics* 9 (1996): 44-46; Zhang Min, “中欧关系的历史、现状和前景 (The history, present status and future of China-EU relations),” *International Survey* 3 (1996): 31-34; Xiao Yuankai, “中欧关系持续发展 (China-EU relations continues on developing),” *Outlook* 42 (1996): 41-42; Gu Junli, “中欧关系的机遇与挑战 (Opportunities and challenges for China-EU relations),” 4 (1996): 24; Wang He, “欧盟对华政策与我国对策思考 (The EU’s policy on China and China’s corresponding policy),” *China Soft Science* 7 (1996): 59-63; Chen Feng, “中国与欧盟关系的现状及前瞻 (The present state and prospect of China’s relations with the European Union),” *Contemporary International Relations* 5 (1996): 10-14; Yin Shouzheng, “中、欧关系现状及前景展望 (The present status and the outlook for China-EU relations),” *World Economics and Politics* 3 (1997): 52-55; Wu Yikang, “欧盟新进展和加强中欧关系的战略意义 (The new developments of the European Union and the strategic implications for enhancing the China-EU relations),” *International Survey* 2 (1998): 4-7; Xi Runchang, “欧盟的对华战略及中欧关系的前景 (The EU’s strategy towards China and the prospect of China-EU relations),” *Peace and Development* 3 (1998): 35-38; Shen Yihuai, “西欧外交进入了与大国建立‘伙伴关系’的新时代 (The Diplomacy of Western Europe Steps into A New Stage to Set up Partnership Relations With Big Powers),” *Contemporary International Relations*, (1998) 2, 16-18; Cui Zhiying, “亚欧合作与中国 (Asian-European cooperation and the relationship with China),” *International Survey* 5 (1998): 37-41; Shi Lujia, “发展中欧关系的积极步骤 (Positive steps in developing China-EU relations),” *Outlook* 28 (1998): 44; Su Huimin, “西欧在多极化世界中寻找自我 (West Europe identifying itself in a multipolar world),” *Peace and Development* 2 (1999): 45-60; Hu Ronghua, “评析欧盟对亚洲与中国的新战略及中国的对策 (Analysing the EU’s strategy towards Asia and China and China’s corresponding policy),” *World Economic Forum* 3 (1999): 17-20; Sun Jing, “中欧关系的新进展及其发展前景 (The progress and prospect of Sino-European Relations),” *World Outlook*, (1999) 8, 8-11; Qiu Yuanlun, “中欧关系的发展目前正面临着前所未有的良好机遇 (China-EU relations are facing unprecedented opportunities for developing),” *Foreign Investment in China* 1 (1999): 7-9; Feng Zhongping, “欧洲一体化与世界多极化 (European Integration and the World Multipolarization),” *Contemporary International Relations* 2 (2000): 43-46; Qin Dezhan, “世纪之交的欧美关系走势及其对中欧关系的影响 (The European-US relations by the turn of the century and its impact on the Sino-European relations),” *Expanding Horizons* 1 (2000): 63-64; Wang Yuping, “浅析冷战后中欧关系发展基础 (Analysis on the Developmental Foundation of Sino-European Affairs after the Cold War),” *Journal of Shanxi University (Philosophy and Social Science)* 2 (2000): 55-57; Xiao Yuankai, “美国因素:影响中欧关系的恒定基数 (The US factor: the constant influence on China-EU relations),” *Europe* 4 (2000): 73-79; Gu Junli, “架构面向 21 世纪的中欧关系 (Building Sino-European relations towards 21st century),” *Peace and Development* 2 (2000): 29-32; Su Huimin, “展望新世纪的中欧关系 (Prospect on China-EU relations),” *Outlook* 4 (2000): 44; Dai Bingran, “中国—欧盟关系:历史、现状与前景 (China-EU relations: history, present status and the prospect),” *Journal of Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics* 4 (2000): 51-54; Zhang Zhengdong, “中欧全面合作伙伴关系前景广阔 (The prospect is broad for the comprehensive partnership between China and EU),” *Outlook* 44 (2000): 62; Zhang Xizhen, “亚欧合作与中国 (Asian-European cooperation and China),” *Studies of International Politics* 1 (2000): 85-92; Zhao Junjie, “新世纪的中欧关系 (Sino-European Relationship in the new century),” *Peace and Development* 4 (2001): 49-52; Lin He, “中国与欧盟:寻求新世纪的全面伙伴关系 (China and the EU: seeking comprehensive partnership in the new century),” *The Contemporary World* 10 (2001): 19-20; Huo Zhengde, “论中欧战略关系 (EU-China strategic partnership),” Wang Yi, “欧盟一体化与多极化 (EU Integration and World Multipolarity),” *International Studies*, (2002) 6, 39-64; Zhou Jun, “欧盟的‘大欧洲’之路 (The EU’s way to the ‘Great Europe’),” *World Economics and Politics*, (2001) 9, 9-13; Feng Zhongping, “从战略高度看待中欧关系

The Iraq crisis had reinforced Chinese observers' perception that the EU was a different actor from the US. There were 35 articles that studied the impact of the Iraq crisis on EU-US relations. Within them, 31 articles had used terms such as 'contradiction', 'breach' or even worse, 'rift' to describe the EU-US relationship at that time. Finally, all 31 articles arrived at a common conclusion that the Iraq crisis enlarged the gap between the EU and the US regarding their understandings of the international order.⁶²³ Moreover, 7 articles made even stronger

(Reviewing the China-EU relations from the strategic perspective)", *Qiushi*, (2002) 9: 58-60; Chen Yugang. "体系秩序与中欧关系 (System orders and China-EU relations)", *International Survey*, (2003) 4: 1-9; Xu Kaiyi. "冷战后中欧关系发展的动力和基础 (The motivation and foundation for the development of the China-EU relations in the post-Cold War era)", *International Forum*, (2002) 4: 32-37; Xing Hua. "论国际格局变化中的中欧关系 (On China-EU Relations in the Changing International Pattern)", *International Studies*, (2003) 1: 25-29; see also Xing Hua. "欧盟外交新态势 (New Dynamics of EU Diplomacy)", *International Studies*, (2002) 4: 25-28; Chen Zhirui. "欧洲模式与欧美关系"研讨会综述 (Workshop on European Model and Relations between Europe and the U.S.A)", *Chinese Journal of European Studies*, (2003) 4: 151-152; Liu Xige. "浅析中国同欧盟的外交与安全合作 (A Tentative Analysis on Diplomacy and Security Co-operation Between China and European Union)", *International Studies*, (2003) 6: 26-30;

⁶²³ Ding Yifan. "从伊拉克战争看美欧关系的走向 (The Trend in European-American Relations in the Light of the Iraqi War)", *World Economics and Politics*, (2003) 8: 41-46; Ruan Zongze. "伊拉克战争与美欧俄"结构性矛盾" (The Iraqi War and the "structural contradictions" among the US, Europe and Russia)", *International Studies*, (2003) 4: 18-22; Zhang Yao. "伊拉克战争后的欧洲形势 (Europe after the Iraq War)", *World Outlook*, (2003) 20:46-47; Sun Keqin, Shen Bilian. "欧洲"分裂"及其影响 (The divergence among European states and the impact)", *Contemporary International Relations*, (2003) 3: 36-37; Feng Shaolei. "伊拉克战争与地缘政治的复归 (Iraq War and the return of the Geopolitics)", *Social Sciences Shanghai China*, (2003) 6: 36-37; Zhang Zhengdong. "伊拉克战争对欧洲的影响 (The impact of the Iraq War on Europe)", *Chinese Cadres Tribune*, (2003) 5: 33-34; Xu Rong. "冷战后美欧关系的结构分析 (US-European Relations after the Cold War: A Structural Analysis)", *International Survey*, (2004) 5: 42-47; Zhou Minkai. "论伊拉克战争后大西洋联盟的危机 (The Crisis of the Atlantic Union after Iraq War)", *Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, (2004) 5:21-28; Li Qiqing. "美欧关系与国际格局——周弘研究员访谈 (US-EU relations and international pattern——an interview with Dr. Zhou Hong)", *Foreign Theoretical Trends*, (2004), Vol. 6:1-5; Qiu, Yuanlun. "无悬念的战争与存有悬念的欧美关系 (Unquestionable War and Questionable EU-US relationship)", *Contemporary International Relations*, 2003, Vol. 4: 14-16; Mei, Zhanrong. "欧美关系: 实质与前景 (EU-US Relations: the Essence and the Prospect)", *Contemporary International Relations*, 2004, Vol. 2: 1-4; Lian, Ruyu. "伊拉克战争改变了什么?——21 世纪世界新秩序与欧美关系调整 (What did the Iraq War change?——new global orders in 21st century and the adjustment of the EU-US relationship)", *World Affairs*, 2003, Vol. 24: 30-31; Cheng, Jiming. "伊拉克战争后的欧盟 (The European Union after the Iraq War)", *Forum of World Economy and Politics*, 2004, Vol.1: 50-53; Feng, Zhongping. "欧美关系: 合而不同"——析伊拉克战争对欧美关系的影响 (EU-US relations: "Divergence in the cooperation"——an analysis of the implications of the Iraq War on the EU-US relations)", *National Security Information*, 2003, Vol. 7: 23-26; Shen, Shishun. "美欧矛盾的新发展及其影响 (New Developments of US-European Contradictions and Their Implications)", *International Studies*, 2003, Vol. 3: 26-30; Pan, Wenbin. "伊拉克战争凸现欧美矛盾 (War on Iraq Protrudes Differences between Europe and U.S.)", *Peace and Development*, 2003, Vol. 3: 35-39; Huang, Renwei. "伊拉克战争: 改变欧洲和中东的地缘政治 (The Iraq War changes the geopolitics in Europe and the Middle East)", *World Outlook*, 2003, Vol. 12: 26-27; Su, Huimin. "怎样看美欧关系 (How to analyse the US-European relations)", *Shishi Baogao*, 2003, Vol.7: 39-43; Cai, Fangbo. "欧美矛盾及其发展趋势 (The divergence between Europe and the US and the tendency of the relationship)", *International Studies*, 2003, Vol. 6: 17-19; Zhou, Minkai. "论伊拉克战争后大西洋联盟的危机 (The Crisis of the Atlantic Union after Iraq War)",

conclusions that the EU and the US had become competitors in terms of international order, and the EU would no longer be the followers of the US, but an independent actor.⁶²⁴ Nonetheless, it should be noted that not all scholars shared the same idea. There were arguments that the EU were consistent with the US in most areas, the divergence on the Iraq Crisis was real but not critical. Therefore, the transatlantic allies would remain, and they would continue collaboration in the process of Iraq's reconstruction,⁶²⁵

Based on the major observations above, Chinese observers had confidence in the EU's willingness to adopt independent policies. In addition, the judgement that the EU was different from the US in terms of the international order had given observers a feeling of intimacy at the strategic level. Moreover, Some observers did not only detect the divergence between the EU and the US, but also believed that there was convergence and shared knowledge—opposing the US's unilateralism—between China and the EU. In this case, China needed to exploit this divergence and use the advantage of the convergence to make further achievements in their

Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences), 2004, Vol. 5: 21-28; see also Zhou, Minkai. “伊拉克战争与大西洋联盟危机的基本特点与性质——兼评“安全主导权之争”说 (The Iraq War and the basic characteristics of the crisis of the Atlantic Union——and a comment on the “clash over security power”)”, *International Studies*, 2004, Vol. 3: 49-53; Zhao, Huaipu. “论冷战后美欧关系的调整 (Readjustments of U.S.-European Relations after the End of the Cold War)”, *World Economics and Politics*, 2003, Vol.4: 28-33; see also Zhao, Huaipu. “美国”新欧洲”战略初探 (A Preliminary Analysis of the U.S.” “New Europe” Strategy)”, *Chinese Journal of European Studies*, 2003, Vol.4:13-24; Yan, Xuetong. “美欧冲突及其启示 (The Clash Between US and Europe and its Enlightenments)”, *International Studies*, 2003, Vol. 4: 7-11.

⁶²⁴ Huan Qingzhi. “伊拉克战后的欧美关系 (EU-US relations after the Iraq War, A perspective from the Europe)”, *Studies of International Politics*, (2004) 1: 52-60; Xia Liping. “伊拉克战争对国际战略格局演变及我国安全环境的影响 (The implication of the Iraq War on International Strategic Patten and China's Security Environment)”, *International Survey*, (2003) 3:9-16; Zhu Feng. “伊拉克战争与国际战略格局的新态势 (The Iraqi War and its Implications for International Strategic Patterns)”, *World Economics and Politics*, 2003, Vol. 11, p.36; Luo, Weibin. “试析伊拉克战争后欧美关系的发展趋向 (An analysis of the tendency of the US-EU relations after the Iraq War)”, *Supplement To The Journal of Sun Yatsen University*, 2003, Vol. 6: 122-125; Huo, Zhengde. “对欧美关系的若干思考 (Thoughts on EU-US relations)”, *International Studies*, 2004, Vol. 2: 50-54; Kou, Shuamin. “影响未来欧美关系的几个变量 (Factors and the impacts on the future of the EU-US relationship)”, *Social Sciences Information in Higher Education*, 2005, Vol. 2: 25-29; Xu Xiuchun. “伊拉克战后美欧关系的现状及分析 (Analysis of the current dynamic of the US-EU relationship after the Iraq War)”, *Journal of Liaocheng University (Scial Sciences Edition)*, 2004, Vol. 2: 156-158.

⁶²⁵ Feng Zhongping. “欧洲国家对美关系考虑及其影响 (An Analysis of Europe's Different Approaches toward U.S.)”, *Contemporary International Relations*, 2003, Vol. 4:30-34; Song Xinning. “从伊拉克战争看欧美关系 (On EU-US Relation from the Perspective of the War on Iraq)”, *Teaching and Research*, 2003, Vol.4:55-57; Shen Shishun. “从八国峰会看美欧关系 (European -American Relations in Light of the Summit of the Group of 8)”, *World Economics and Politics*, 2003, Vol. 8:47-51; Zhou Hong. “Analysis of the Contemporary European-US relations)”, *Qiushi*, (2002) 8: 61-63; Kong Jiping. “欧美关系的现状及发展 (The situation of Europe-American relationship and its development)”, *Journal of Yunnan Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (2003) 2:23-26.

bilateral relationship.⁶²⁶ Consequently, China believed that it was good timing to place lifting the arms embargo on the agenda.

However, what Chinese observers had perceived from the EU was a mistaken confidence. It was true that the EU had disputes with the US regarding the Iraq War, but it would be an exaggeration to so deduce that the EU would become a power to constrain the US hegemony. And, as stated in Section 4.3.3.3 in Chapter 4, China was mistaken when it confused multilateralism with multipolarity, as the EU was in favour of the former but not interested in the latter. In fact, not all Chinese scholars agreed with this mistaken confidence. In an interview with a European specialist in China, it was argued that this confidence was based on China's misperception of the EU: China regarded the EU as a pole to constrain the US hegemony in the former's promotion of a multipolar world. But, it was believed that the EU and its member states did not consider themselves as a pole, and the EU wanted to promote multilateralism, not to build any more polarity.⁶²⁷ However, at that time observers who worked on the global order or grand strategy perceived the EU in a general way, hence the rise of a strong power who had the potential to balance the US was what they expected to see, and it would be even better if this power had some divergences and disputes with the US, so that US power would be restrained by a multipolar world. For those Europeanists in China, they had a rather different observation (see the last few quotes in 44), but their voices were not as loud as the others.

Furthermore, the EU's oppositions to the US that had been perceived by China was mainly due to individual nations such as France and Germany. Consequently, China had placed the prior diplomatic resources on such individual states, hoping that it could change the EU's policy on arms sales by engaging with these powerhouses, but at the same time it neglected the EU institutions and other less powerful states.⁶²⁸ To some extent, lifting the arms embargo was initially a political-commercial exchange at the bilateral level between China and certain EU member states. However, because this was a topic that needed a unanimous vote, it was still a

⁶²⁶ Wang Yi. "中欧伙伴关系的机遇与前景 (Opportunities and Prospects of the Partnership between China and Europe)", *International Studies*, (2003) 5:22-26; Tian, Dewen. "以合作取代对抗——中国与欧盟政治关系中的合作与冲突 (Cooperation replaces conflicts——cooperation and conflicts in China-EU political relationship)", *International Trade*, (2003) 9: 4-8.

⁶²⁷ Interview in China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing, March 2014.

⁶²⁸ Interview in Renmin University of China, Beijing, March 2014.

narrative that had to be processed under the European Union's framework by all the member states.

Focusing on specific states represented two serious mistakes. One was that this neglected the EU's normative identity. As a whole, the EU undoubtedly has normative preferences/interests. The individual member states, on the other hand, do not necessarily evaluate normative interests as being as important as material interests. In addition, by wielding its economic attractiveness towards only some of its commercial partners, China probably underestimated a number of other states' normative priorities, such as those of the Nordic countries.

The second is that China's biased efforts on the EU and the member states reflected its ignorance of the EU's institutions. The unanimous approval process meant that China has put itself into an uneven campaign against the US—China had to get consent from all (then) 25 member states, but the US just needed one veto. The enlargement of the EU in 2004 made China's campaign even harder, as those 'New Europe' states—who were in favour of the transatlantic relations—joined the Union, this campaign has become a task that was easy for the US but extremely difficult for China.⁶²⁹

This section has analysed why the proposal to lift the arms embargo was initiated. First, the role identities of 'maturing partners' have created the dynamic for the two parties to further develop their relationship by working on certain key issues, among which lifting the arms embargo was a case that would deepen mutual political trust and broaden the scope of cooperation, thus it was a rational and logical move to propose the lifting of the embargo. Second, China perceived the EU different from the US in the wake of the Iraq crisis. China believed that the EU was divergent from the US in terms of the understanding of the international order, and therefore the EU was strategically close to China in promoting multilateralism and building multipolarity in international politics (but the latter was only China's one-way expectation, the EU has not approved these ambitions). Furthermore, China

⁶²⁹ Interview in the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Beijing, March 2014.

hoped—as based on different perceptions of the international order—that the EU would be independent of the US and be able to lift the arms embargo.

6.5 How was it discussed?

The proposal to lift the arms embargo drew significant attention from diverse parties, and initiated massive debate within the EU, between the EU and China, and between the EU and the US. This section will examine (1) China’s argument to lift the embargo, (2) the debate within the EU, and (3) the debate across the Atlantic on the basis of the triangle of role identities.

6.5.1 China’s proposal: beyond the symbols

China claimed that the arms embargo was a relic of the Cold War, which did not conform to the current reality.⁶³⁰ Besides, naming China on the arms embargo list with countries like Sudan, Zimbabwe and Myanmar was discriminatory against China, and a contradiction to the strategic partnership.⁶³¹ China’s argument was backed by French and German leaders by describing the arms embargo as ‘anachronistic’ and ‘discriminatory’,⁶³² Javier Solana, the High Representative for the CFSP, also recognised the improvement that China has made in terms of its human rights, therefore the embargo was no longer justified in being maintained.⁶³³ Moreover, observers indicated that the nature of the arms embargo was merely a declaration, in which it suspended ‘military cooperation’ and banned the ‘trade in arms with China’.⁶³⁴ However, the declaration did not define the implications of this ‘military cooperation’, nor did

⁶³⁰ “Wen Jiabao: Arm Sales Embargo against China Is a Legacy of the Cold War”, 2004/12/08, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zzjg_663340/xos_664404/dqzzywt_664812/t173843.shtml; “China calls on the EU to lift the arms embargo”, *BBC Chinese*, 4 December 2003, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_3290000/newsid_3291100/3291147.stm. (accessed 4 December 2016).

⁶³¹ Filipe Rufino and Elitsa Vucheva, “EU Arms Embargo is “political discrimination”, says Chinese Ambassador”, *EUobserver*, Brussels, 21 April 2005, available at <https://euobserver.com/news/18891>; “Restoring arms sales is to abolish political discrimination against China”, *BBC Chinese*, 6 March 2005, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_4320000/newsid_4324100/4324141.stm. (available at 5 December 2016).

⁶³² “France calls China arms ban “anachronistic”, *China Daily*, 21 April 2004, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-04/21/content_436306.htm; “Schröder Calls for End to Arms Embargo against China”, *Deutsche Welle*, 2 December 2003, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/schr%C3%B6der-calls-for-end-to-arms-embargo-against-china/a-1047143>. (accessed 7 December 2016).

⁶³³ Denis Staunton, “Solana backs arms sales to China”, *The Irish Times*, March 24 2005, available at <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/solana-backs-arms-sales-to-china-1.425971>. (accessed 7 December 2016).

⁶³⁴ European Council, “Annex II Declaration on China”, Presidency Conclusion, SN 254/2/89.

it name the arms that should be included on the embargo list, therefore it had no legal bindings on the member states' weapons exports to China.⁶³⁵

Besides the embargo declaration, the EU adopted a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports in 1998 in order to lay down the standards of arms sales by the member states, but the effectiveness of this Code of Conduct largely depends on the interpretations of the member states and, in fact, several European states (mainly France, Italy and the United Kingdom) had sidestepped the embargo and sold a large amount of military equipment (mainly aircraft components, electronic equipment and countermeasure equipment) to China. According to the EU's annual reports on this Code of Conduct, the value of licences issued for arms exports to China was 54.4 million Euros in 2001, the figure increasing to 209.8 million in 2002 and 415.8 million in 2003, respectively.⁶³⁶

Since the arms embargo did not actually prevent the EU member states from selling arms to China, then lifting it should not affect the status of arms exports to China. Does this mean that the arms embargo, like the Chinese and European officials said, was just political discrimination? The fact is that lifting the embargo contained more meaning than merely eliminating political discrimination. In other words, if we say lifting the embargo was a symbolic move to clear the path for the development of EU-China relations, then we need to dig deeper to explore what consequences this could bring to the two parties.

China advocated the EU's reconsideration of the arms embargo on the basis of the overall strategic partnership,⁶³⁷ the European Council also advised the Council of the European Union to evaluate the arms embargo in the context of the EU's overall relations with China.⁶³⁸ The

⁶³⁵ Pascal Vennesson, "Lifting the EU Arms Embargo on China: Symbols and Strategy", *EURAMERICA* 37, no. 3 (2007); Grimmett, Richard F. and Papademetriou, Theresa. "European Union's Arms Control Regime and Arms Exports to China: Background and Legal Analysis", CRS Report for Congress, March 1 2005.

⁶³⁶ European Parliament, "Annual Report according to Operative Provision 8 of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports", Official Journal of the European Union, respectively (2002/C 319/01), (2003/C 320/01), (2004/C 316/01).

⁶³⁷ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhang Qiyue's Press Conference on November 18 2004", Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/dyz_681240/1206_681890/fyrygth_681898/t170568.shtml. (accessed 11 December 2016).

⁶³⁸ Council of the European Union, *Brussels European Council 17 and 18 June 2004 Presidency Conclusions*.

embargo was seen as an obstacle that blocked the further evolution of the EU-China relationship; the question was, in which realm?

Commerce lies at the core of the EU-China relationship. For the EU, an evolving relationship entails increased accesses to the Chinese market, enhanced protection for the EU's economic interests in China, and an improved macroeconomic environment for EU firms and investments to run a fairer competition with local companies. These kinds of appeals have been made by the EU on many occasions when engaging with China; for instance, in the 2003 Policy Paper on China, the EU expressed its expectations of China fulfilling the WTO commitment in market opening, enforcement of intellectual property rights, and improvement in financial services.⁶³⁹ At the annual summits in 2003 and 2004, the EU reiterated its needs to strengthen the commercial ties in terms of macroeconomic policy, market openness, intellectual property rights and investment opportunities.⁶⁴⁰ These demands were further reaffirmed and systematically summarised in the Policy Paper on EU-China trade and investment in 2006,⁶⁴¹ and they were expected to be met through an evolving EU-China relationship.

In addition to these long-term demands, a harmonious relationship was also accompanied by a number of short-term boosts in commercial contracts.⁶⁴² As mentioned in Section 5.3.1, bulk contracts were signed during the mutual state visits of China and France, and the 1.2 billion US dollar Airbus order from China was crucial for the French aircraft manufacturer to compete

⁶³⁹ European Commission, "A maturing partnership - shared interests and challenges in EU-China relations, Brussels, 10.9.2003, COM(2003) 533 final.

⁶⁴⁰ Council of the European Union, "Sixth China-EU Summit, Beijing, 30 October 2003, Joint Press Statement", Brussels, 30 October 2003, 13424/03 (Presse 298); ⁶⁴⁰ Council of the European Union, "7th EU-China Summit, The Hague, 8 December 2004, Joint Statement", Brussels, 8 December 2004, 15065/04 (Presse 337).

⁶⁴¹ Commission of the European Communities, "Accompanying COM(2006) 631 final: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities, A policy paper on EU-China trade and investment: Competition and Partnership", Brussels, 24.10.2006, COM(2006) 632 final.

⁶⁴² It should be *noted* that China's efforts to sign big contracts with individual states—especially those powerful ones—were based on China's misperception that it can influence the EU's stance by lobbying the big states. As mentioned in 5.3.2, China's perception of the opposition to the US mainly rooted from these big states like Germany and France, and at the meantime they were influential states within the EU. Therefore it seemed to be a reasonable move for China to engage these powerful states and thereby persuading the EU. Consequently China placed most of the diplomatic resources on the engagement with these states, and signing big commercial contracts was one of these kind of diplomatic actions. Even though these contracts were national in nature, and the benefits mainly flew to the nation states, but from China's perspective, fostering a good relationship with these nation states meant that they would support China's stance at the EU stage, and given their influences within the EU, they would be able to shape the dynamic of the arms embargo campaign towards the China-favoured end.

with Boeing in the Chinese aeronautic market. During Chinese Premier Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to Germany in 2004, Volkswagen and Siemens signed large contracts to extend their business in China.⁶⁴³ The harmonious relations generated a positive dynamic for these large deals, but a variation in the relationship, especially in the particular case of the arms embargo, could result in delays to those deals. It was reported that the Airbus contracts were postponed in December 2004 due to the fact that little progress had been made on the EU's side to lift the embargo.⁶⁴⁴ Although this report has been rejected by Chinese officials, it did convey a message, as Chinese officials said, that the arms embargo could 'have some negative impact on China-EU relations',⁶⁴⁵ and 'without such discrimination no doubt the trade volume would be even bigger and we would have more benefits from the bilateral cooperation'.⁶⁴⁶

Besides commercial relations, a certain significance in building strategic trust was attached to the lifting of the arms embargo. As discussed in 5.3.2, China's assessment and expectation of the EU was that it could be an independent international actor, and lifting the arms embargo would confirm China's judgement that the EU could exclude interference from the US and, in a further step, become a pole to constrain the US hegemony. From a strategic perspective, this was more significant than not politically discriminating against China, and this should be the genuine implication of the 'strategic partnership'.

Moreover, despite China's rejection to link the arms embargo with human rights,⁶⁴⁷ the embargo was actually imposed because of the West's revulsion over China's repression of its citizens in June 1989, and it has been gradually connected with China's human rights record in general ever since. In turn, lifting the embargo would imply that the EU had recognised the

⁶⁴³ "Chinese Prime Minister Focuses on Trade During German Visit", *Deutsche Welle*, 4 May 2004, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/chinese-prime-minister-focuses-on-trade-during-german-visit/a-1187821>. (accessed 7 February 2013).

⁶⁴⁴ Hutzler, Charles., Michaels, Daniel. "Airbus Struggles To Nail Down Chinese Order", *The Wall Street Journal*, December 3 2004, available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB110201425110789416>. (accessed 15 December 2016).

⁶⁴⁵ "Official: Airbus deal not linked to arms ban", *China Daily*, 3 December 2004, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-12/03/content_397154.htm. (accessed 15 December 2016)

⁶⁴⁶ "China urges EU to "Trash" Arms Embargo", *Deutsche Welle*, 7 November 2005, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/china-urges-eu-to-trash-arms-embargo/a-1765383>. (accessed 15 December 2016).

⁶⁴⁷ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Jianchao's Press Conference at a Regular Press Conference on May 10 2005", Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/yz_676205/1206_676404/fyrygth_676412/t194968.shtml. (accessed 16 December 2016)

improvement of China's human rights situation. This implication has not been confirmed in any way by any official Chinese source, but can be proved by the opposition from human rights organizations who voiced the notion that lifting the embargo would 'sabotage human rights activists in China'.⁶⁴⁸ They feared that if the arms embargo were lifted, it would mean that the EU had recognised that China's human rights record was significantly improved, and whilst this would certainly frustrate human rights activists, it would be a result that the Chinese government would like to see—it would improve China's international profile in terms of human rights.

To sum up, lifting the embargo was not merely a symbolic move but had significant implications for both the EU and China: it reflected China's political needs in its international strategy and profile; and, also, it entailed a prosperous outlook for the EU's future trade with China. For the two sides, this proposal to lift the embargo was an exchange of political support for commercial interests.

6.5.2 Within the EU: the normative power

While China was attempting to apply its commercial charm to persuade the EU (and its member states) to lift the embargo, it had neglected the EU's identity as a normative power. Within the EU, there was a large amount of debate among member state and institutions in this regard, which demonstrated that not all the member states and institutional agents prioritized commercial interests over normative preferences. This reflected the EU's characteristics as a normative power which takes normative interests as seriously as any others. China's efforts have mostly concentrated on commercial aspects, but ultimately they did not meet this end. This was a critical factor that resulted in the failure of the campaign to lift the embargo.

It was widely believed that the EU member states were divided into two factions on their stance towards the embargo.⁶⁴⁹ On the one side, France and Germany were enthusiastic in their

⁶⁴⁸ "EU-China Arms Embargo: Don't Sabotage Human Rights Activist in China, says Amnesty to EU", Amnesty International, European Institutions Office, available at <http://www.amnesty.eu/en/news/press-releases/eu/arms/eu-china-arms-embargo-don-t-sabotage-human-rights-activists-in-china-says-amnesty-to-eu-0176/#.WMnSRW-LRaQ>. (accessed 16 December 2016).

⁶⁴⁹ Nicola Casarini, "The International Politics of the Chinese Arms Embargo Issue", 2007; Joakim Kreutz, "Reviewing the EU Arms Embargo on China: the Clash between Value and Rationale in the European Security Strategy", *Perspectives*, 7/1/2004, Issue 22: 43-58; Terry Narramore, "China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy"; Tang Shao Cheng, "The EU's Policy towards China and the Arms Embargo", *Asia*

promotion of lifting of the embargo, and they were supported by Italy, Spain and Greece; on the other side, the Netherlands and Nordic countries—including Denmark, Sweden and Finland—strongly insisted that the embargo should be maintained due to China’s poor human rights record.

However, this chapter’s investigation of the multiple stances within the EU revealed that the boundary was rather blurred between the member states who were ‘for’ or ‘against’ the embargo, and the statements made in this regard by the member states were quite ambiguous, and indeed kept changing. Instead, there was a clear boundary between the faction who prioritized normative demands and the faction who preferred to put norms aside and pursue material interests through an enhanced EU-China relationship.

France was one of the most supportive actors in terms of favouring lifting the embargo. The then President Jacques Chirac repeatedly called on the EU to lift this ‘outdated’ embargo on China.⁶⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the then Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin pushed his EU colleagues to end the embargo,⁶⁵¹ and Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin reiterated the French government’s stance as he described the embargo as ‘anachronistic’ and ‘discriminatory’.⁶⁵² In contrast to the enthusiasm of the government, however, French legislators were rather concerned with China’s human rights situation, as a large number of them boycotted Chinese President Hu’s speech at the French National Assembly, and joined human rights activists to protest against China.⁶⁵³

Europe Journal, October 2005, v. 3, iss. 3: 313-21; Lora Saalman and Yuan Jing-dong. “The European Union and the Arms Ban on China”, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 1 July 2004, available at <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/european-union-and-arms-ban-china/>. (accessed 19 December 2016).

⁶⁵⁰ During his meeting with visiting Chinese President Hu Jintao, President Chirac said the arms embargo “makes no more sense today”, as it “dates back more than 15 years and...no longer corresponds with the political reality of the contemporary world”, see *Agence France Presse*, “Chirac renews call for end of EU arms embargo on China”, 27 January 2004, accessed via *Factiva*. In his visiting to Beijing, Chirac reiterated his support to lift the embargo, see *Euractive*, “France urges lifting of EU arms embargo against China”.

⁶⁵¹ “France and China Cozy Up”, *Deutsche Welle*, 27 January 2004, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/france-and-china-cozy-up/a-1098137>. (accessed 19 December 2016).

⁶⁵² “France calls China arms ban “anachronistic””, *China Daily*, 21 April 2005, available at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-04/21/content_436306.htm. (accessed 19 December 2016).

⁶⁵³ Sonika Gupta, “China, EU and the Arms Embargo”, Observer Research Foundation, 27 February 2004, available at <http://www.orfonline.org/research/china-eu-and-the-arms-embargo/>. (accessed 19 December 2016).

On his visit to Beijing in December 2003, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder gave China his support in terms of lifting the embargo.⁶⁵⁴ But he was more isolated than his French counterpart in the German domestic political atmosphere, as he was facing fierce challenges from his own party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the junior coalition party, the Greens. Immediately after Schröder's visit to Beijing, a Greens leader, Winfried Nachtwei, stated that the embargo should be maintained in order to protect human rights.⁶⁵⁵ In October 2004, the German Parliament (Bundestag) rejected ending the embargo as both the SDP and the Green parliamentarians voted against the Chancellor's proposal.⁶⁵⁶ Even though Schröder claimed that the government has the final authority to make the foreign policy, regardless of the result of the vote in Parliament, this argument was opposed by the Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in the defence of human rights,⁶⁵⁷ and met with the harsh rebuke of Christa Nickels, head of the human rights commission of the German parliament, that this would undermine democratic legitimacy.⁶⁵⁸

The Netherlands, which were often identified as a supporter of maintaining the embargo, indicated that it would agree to lift the embargo *if* that was the will of the majority of EU member states.⁶⁵⁹ The Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende said that it would be injurious for 'political and diplomatic relations and for the Netherlands' upcoming EU presidency' if the Netherlands stood alone against the proposal to lift the embargo.⁶⁶⁰ This refers to the fact that the Netherlands was to take the EU presidency in the second half of 2004, and the 7th EU-China Summit was about to be held in December 2004. According to a US source, the desire for a

⁶⁵⁴ Lisbeth Kirk, "Schröder wants to lift arms embargo against China".

⁶⁵⁵ "Schröder Calls For End To Arms Embargo Against China", *Deutsche Welle*, 2 December 2003, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/schr%C3%B6der-calls-for-end-to-arms-embargo-against-china/a-1047143>. (accessed 21 December 2016).

⁶⁵⁶ "German Parliament Rejects Arms Sales to China", *Deutsche Welle*, 29 October 2004, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/german-parliament-rejects-arms-sales-to-china/a-1380190>. (accessed 21 December 2016).

⁶⁵⁷ Alok Rashmi Mukhopadhyay, "EU Arms Embargo on China: The German debate", Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, 2 May 2005, available at http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/EUArmsEmbargoChina_AkMukhopadhyay_020505. (accessed 21 December 2016).

⁶⁵⁸ "Chancellor Under Fire over China Arms Ban", *Deutsche Welle*, 4 December 2004, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/chancellor-under-fire-over-china-arms-ban/a-1418673>. (accessed 21 December 2016).

⁶⁵⁹ Frank Ching, "Changing Dynamics In Eu-china Arms Relations", *China Brief*, Volume: 4 Issue: 5, The Jamestown Foundation, 8 March 2004, available at <https://jamestown.org/program/changing-dynamics-in-eu-china-arms-relations/>. (accessed 21 December 2016).

⁶⁶⁰ Lora Saalman, Yuan Jing-dong, "The European Union and the Arms Ban on China", 2004.

successful summit intervened with the Dutch government making such a statement.⁶⁶¹ However, the Dutch Parliament had a strong position to maintain the embargo unless China could provide explicit and concrete evidence that its human rights record had improved ‘significantly’.⁶⁶²

Denmark was seen as an ally to the Netherlands in the campaign to maintain the embargo; however, Denmark was divided internally on this issue as well. The Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, on his visit to Beijing in February 2004, was reported to say that Denmark would not oppose the lifting of the embargo. Immediately after his return to Denmark, Rasmussen was criticized for this remark, and met with demands to explain himself to the Foreign Policy Committee of the Parliament. Finally, a compromise was made to announce that Denmark would consider the removal of the embargo only on the basis of China’s commitment to improve its human rights record.⁶⁶³

Similar dynamics were seen in Sweden, Finland and Belgium. Whilst they were ‘open minded’ to go along with any common stance within the EU to deal with the embargo, they declared that this issue must be linked with human rights, and would like to see China’s human rights situation improved first.⁶⁶⁴

The UK was rather cautious and irresolute on this issue. In January 2004, its official stance was one of reluctance to give a direct answer to the question of the government’s position on the

⁶⁶¹ “Netherlands/EU China arms embargo: briefing for Dutch officials”, *WikiLeaks*, 22 July 2004, Canonical ID: 04THEHAGUE1846_a, available at https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04THEHAGUE1846_a.html. (accessed 22 December 2016)

⁶⁶² Axel Berkofsky, “EU unlikely to lift China arms embargo soon”, *Asia Times*, 1 May 2004, available at <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/FE01Ad06.html>. (accessed 22 December 2016)

⁶⁶³ Frank Ching, “Changing Dynamics In Eu-china Arms Relations”, 2004.

⁶⁶⁴ See Hellström, Jerker. “The EU Arms Embargo on China: A Swedish Perspective”, Defence Analysis, Swedish Defence Research Agency, January 2010, available at https://www.foi.se/download/18.7920f8c915921957088a067/1484039704289/foir_2946.pdf; “Human rights issues discussed during Chinese Foreign Minister’s visit to Finland”, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 20 April 2004, available at <http://formin.finland.fi/public/?contentid=61492&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>; New Europe Brussels Team, “Chinese premier confident of end to EU arms ban”, *New Europe*, 9 May 2004, available at <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/chinese-premier-confident-end-eu-arms-ban/>. (accessed 22 December 2016).

embargo.⁶⁶⁵ In May 2004, British Prime Minister Tony Blair allegedly gave positive signals to his Chinese counterpart that the embargo would be lifted,⁶⁶⁶ but no more news followed. It was not until January 2005 that British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw for the first time told Beijing that the EU was ready to lift the embargo.⁶⁶⁷ However, his mind was changed a few weeks after China passed the Anti-Secession Law against the independence trends in Taiwan.⁶⁶⁸ Moreover, there were also strong opposition within the UK parliament to the government's intention to lift the embargo. In 2004, 44 MPs signed a motion tabled by Labour's Commons MP Harry Cohen to keep the arms embargo in place due to China's abuse of human rights.⁶⁶⁹

The debate went on among the EU institutions and the officials within them. Peter Mandelson, the Commissioner for Trade, during his visiting to Beijing in February 2005, was reported to say that it was unreasonable to maintain the embargo.⁶⁷⁰ On different occasions, EU High Representative Solana recognised China's improvement in human rights, and was in favour of seeing the arms ban lifted.⁶⁷¹ Similar opinions were voiced by Romano Prodi, the President of EU Commission, as he said it was time to reconsider the issue of lifting the embargo.⁶⁷² But the Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, who was also the last Governor of Hong Kong, disagreed with his colleges, as he expressed his concern over China's still poor human rights situation and the inappropriateness to lift the ban at that moment; furthermore, he asked China to provide concrete evidence of its improvements in human rights if China wished to see further progress in the negotiation towards lifting the embargo.⁶⁷³

⁶⁶⁵ Melody Chen, "UK "strongly opposed" to force across Taiwan Strait", *Taipei Times*, 20 January 2004, available at <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2004/01/20/2003092068>.

⁶⁶⁶ "Blair's backing for China trade angers activists", *The Scotsman*, 11 May 2004, available at <http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/blair-s-backing-for-china-trade-angers-activists-1-530529>. (accessed 22 December 2016).

⁶⁶⁷ Antoaneta Bezlova, "Tiananmen aside, EU readies to lift arms ban", *Asia Times*, 22 January 2005, available at <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/GA22Ad02.html>. (accessed 23 December 2016).

⁶⁶⁸ Axel Berkofsky, "U-turn politics on EU-China arms ban", *Asia Times*, 25 March 2005, available at <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/GC25Ad01.html>. (accessed 27 December 2016).

⁶⁶⁹ "Blair's backing for China trade angers activists", *The Scotsman*, 11 May 2004.

⁶⁷⁰ "EU trade chief criticizes arms ban on China", *China Plus News* via *People's Daily*, 27 February 2005, available at http://en.people.cn/200502/27/eng20050227_174827.html. (accessed 28 December 2016).

⁶⁷¹ "France and China Cozy Up", *Deutsche Welle*, 27 January 2004; Denis Staunton, "Solana backs arms sales to China", *The Irish Times*, March 24 2005.

⁶⁷² "Arms Embargo on China Makes No More Sense: Chirac", *Xinhua News Agency*.

⁶⁷³ Chris Patten, "Lifting of the arms embargo on China: The Rueda Report on Arms Exports" Speech at the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 November 2004, SPEECH/04/483.

The European Parliament had an uncompromising stance against any lifting of the embargo. On 18 December 2003, the European Parliament passed a resolution that called on the Council and the member states not to lift the embargo on the trade of arms with China, citing China's poor human rights record and the existent threat against Taiwan.⁶⁷⁴ On 17 November 2004, the EP reiterated its position to maintain the embargo until there were specific improvements in China's human rights situation.⁶⁷⁵ EP members clearly stated that the member states must not sacrifice normative principles for economic interests, and should prioritize human rights in their political relations with China.⁶⁷⁶ This appeal was reflected on the EP's report in 2005 in which it criticized that the EU's 'relations with China have made progress only in the trade and economic fields, without any substantial achievement as regards human rights and democracy issues'.⁶⁷⁷ In addition to its repeated avocation to maintain the embargo, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the EP further suggested that the adherence to the arms embargo against China should be included in negotiations about the EU's Neighbourhood Policy and Partnership Agreements.⁶⁷⁸

The narratives above drew a line between the two sides who were pro and against the lifting of the arms embargo. It has been clearly demonstrated that the boundary between these two stances did not lie between member states, for instance France versus the Netherlands, nor among the institutions within the EU, but between the campaigns who preferred material interests and those who prioritized normative needs. It entails that being committed to norms and promoting them has become a particular aspect of the EU's diplomatic policy. In this case, normative interest has been appraised in the comparison with material interests such as commercial profit and economic benefits, and to some agents, such as the European and

⁶⁷⁴ European Parliament, "Removal of the EU embargo on arms sales to China", European Parliament resolution on arms sales to China.

⁶⁷⁵ European Parliament, "Arms Exports", European Parliament resolution on the Council's Fifth Annual Report according to Operative Provision 8 of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (2004/2103(INI)).

⁶⁷⁶ "China Weapons Embargo Full of Holes", *Deutsche Welle*, 16 March 2005, available at <http://www.dw.com/en/china-weapons-embargo-full-of-holes/a-1519548>. (accessed 27 December 2016).

⁶⁷⁷ Elmar Brok, Article 32, "Report on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the European Communities – 2003 (8412/2004 - 2004/2172(INI))".

⁶⁷⁸ Marjory Van Den Broeke, Press Officer, Foreign Affairs Committee, the European Parliament, "Code on arms exports must be binding", 3 October 2005, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+IM-PRESS+20051003IPR00966+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>. (accessed 28 December 2016).

National Parliaments, normative interests have been perceived as being superior to material interests.

Pursuing normative interests is a natural characteristic of the EU as an international actor; as analysed in Section 3.3.2 in Chapter 3, the EU is a multifaceted entity which has diverse initiatives, but upholding normative values could empower the EU with distinctive advantages in world politics. In this case, the EU, as Manners has suggested, must not only be an actor that is ‘constructed on a normative basis’, but that has also demonstrated that it ‘predisposes to act in a normative way’.⁶⁷⁹ China attempted to get the EU’s political support in exchange for commercial benefits. Some agents within the EU were attracted by this proposal, but there were agents who persisted in championing normative interests in EU foreign policy. Their emphasis on normative values has constructed, and also reflected, the EU’s identity as a normative power. As a multifaceted actor, either pursuing material or normative interests is equally natural for the EU, but China’s ignorance or underestimation of the EU’s normative power was a critical reason for the failure of the embargo-lifting campaign.

6.5.3 The EU was NOT the US

The debate took place not only in Europe, but was also intensively debated on the transatlantic stage. The US’s reaction to the proposal to abolish the embargo was swift, who immediately exerted pressure on the EU to maintain the embargo. Shortly after the European Council requested a review of the embargo in December 2003, the US government lobbied the EU and its member states to retain the embargo, as the State Department spokesman Richard Boucher argued, the U.S. and Europe had complementary positions on the prohibition of arms sales.⁶⁸⁰ It was also reported that the US Secretary of State Colin Powell raised US concerns with Brussels and other European capitals, and the US warned that the divergent attitudes towards the arms embargo on China could lead to a new transatlantic breach after the Iraq War.⁶⁸¹ In February 2005, Condoleezza Rice reaffirmed that China’s human rights situation was not good

⁶⁷⁹ Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?”, 252.

⁶⁸⁰ Philip Pan, “U.S. Pressing EU to Uphold Arms Embargo Against China; Rights Abuses, Security Cited; France, Germany Back Beijing”, 31 January 2004, *The Washington Post* via *Factiva*, WP00000020040131e01v0001o.

⁶⁸¹ Peter Spiegel, “US moves to stop EU lifting arms embargo”, 1 April 2004, *Financial Times* via *Factiva*, FTCOM00020040402e0410001g.

enough to justify lifting the embargo, and the military balance would be broken if advanced European technology were sold to China. Meanwhile, Rice urged the EU and its member states to take US concerns into consideration with regards to any decision they reached.⁶⁸² This topic was raised at the highest level during US President Bush's visit to Brussels. Bush spoke out regarding US concerns that 'lifting the ban would be seen as a transfer of technology to China', which would speed up China's military modernization and thereby challenge the balance of power in East Asia.⁶⁸³ In addition, US officials threatened that the elimination of the embargo would put transatlantic military cooperation at risk, and result in a restriction on the sales of US military technologies to Europe.⁶⁸⁴

The US opposition arose for two main reasons. First, the US believed that lifting the embargo on China would open the floodgate to EU arms sales to China. In a further step, the acquirement of the EU's advanced technologies would enhance China's military capability, and consequently break the regional military balance in East Asia and endanger US forces and their allies in that region.⁶⁸⁵ Second, the US insisted that the arms embargo was imposed for the purpose of respecting human rights and should remain linked to human rights records in China which, as the US official argued, had not evidenced any improvements, and even experienced some 'negative developments' after the incidents in 1989.⁶⁸⁶ Therefore the embargo should be maintained for the sake of human rights.

The EU disagreed with the US arguments. First, the EU assured the US that lifting the embargo would not mean that there would be no restriction on arms exports to China, as the lax embargo would be replaced by a stringent Code of Conduct which would define explicit provisions for

⁶⁸² Secretary Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks With European Commission President Josi Manuel Barroso and European Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner After Their Meeting".

⁶⁸³ "Bush Voices Concern on Plan to Lift China Arms Embargo", *The New York Times*, 22 February 2005, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/22/international/europe/bush-voices-concern-on-plan-to-lift-china-arms-embargo.html>. (accessed 4 January 2017).

⁶⁸⁴ Edward Alden. and Demetri Sevastopulo, "Lugar threat on EU arms sales to China", *Financial Times*, 21 February 2005, available at http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4750f584-83ad-11d9-bee3-00000e2511c8.html?ft_site=falcon&desktop=true#axzz4dEMh2Mx5. (accessed 5 January 2017)

⁶⁸⁵ Grimmett, Richard F. and Papademetriou, Theresa. "European Union's Arms Control Regime and Arms Exports to China: Background and Legal Analysis", CRS Report for Congress, March 1 2005, p. 10; Rice, Condoleezza., Secretary, "Remarks With European Commission President Josi Manuel Barroso and European Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner After Their Meeting".

⁶⁸⁶ Richard Bouche, Spokesman, "Daily Press Briefing", January 25 2005, Archive, U.S. Department of State, available at <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2005/41219.htm>. (accessed 5 January 2017).

the EU's arms sales and prevent their increase in either quantitative or qualitative ways.⁶⁸⁷ Therefore, the elimination of the embargo would be followed by the application of more effective regulation on this regard, and the arms sales to China would be under rigorous supervision, and thus the US should not be worried. Second, there were EU agents who recognised the improvements in China's human rights situation. As mentioned above, High Representative Solana had made such acknowledgements. Moreover, during the meetings with US lobbyists, EU member state officials also stated that China's improvement in human rights should not be ignored, even if they were not considered sufficient.⁶⁸⁸

The divergences between the US and the EU in this regard are listed in Table 7 below. This table demonstrates why it is said that the EU was *not* the US. Because the EU did not share US concerns regarding East Asian security, it had its own initiatives to make judgements and policies, and it showed a tendency to act independently.

The first divergence was the most straightforward argument between the two parties. The EU stated that an upgraded Code of Conduct should be able to address US concerns over the control of arms sales to China, therefore the US should have no reason to worry. The US, however, was suspicious of this claim, with President Bush stating 'whether they can or not (develop a protocol that should not concern the US), we will see'.⁶⁸⁹ In spite of the EU's assurance, the US was still concerned over the possibility that European technologies could be used by China against US forces in East Asia, and that China's military modernization would result in threats to US allies in the region.⁶⁹⁰ The US's attitude confused European officials, who asked their US counterparts why the US preferred the embargo to a stronger Code of Conduct.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁷ Brussels European Council, Article 57, "Presidency Conclusion", 16/17 December 2004, 16238/1/04, REV 1, CONCL 4, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/83201.pdf.

⁶⁸⁸ For instance, Dutch and Italian officials have argued that China did achieve some improvements in domestic human rights. See *WikiLeaks*, "Italy - EU Arms Embargo on China", 25 June 2004, Canonical ID: 04ROME2489_a, available at https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04ROME2489_a.html; "Netherlands/EU China arms embargo: briefing for Dutch officials", 22 July 2004, Canonical ID: 04THEHAGUE1846_a.

⁶⁸⁹ "Bush Voices Concern on Plan to Lift China Arms Embargo", *The New York Times*, 22 February 2005.

⁶⁹⁰ To be fair, the US had reasons to question the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct, as it is not legally binding. And according to the US source, they were aware of that there were member states like France and the UK who were reluctant to see a more strict and legally binding Code of Conduct, see *WikiLeaks*, "China arms embargo: April 2 PSC Debate and next steps for U.S.", April 7 2004, Canonical ID: 04BRUSSELS1510_a, available at https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04BRUSSELS1510_a.html. (accessed 7 January 2017).

⁶⁹¹ *WikiLeaks*, "Netherlands/EU China arms embargo: briefing for Dutch officials", 22 July 2004, Canonical ID: 04THEHAGUE1846_a.

Table 7. The divergences between the US and the EU on the lifting of the arms embargo

The US	The EU
1. Lifting the arms embargo on China —→ Large scale of arms exports to China —→ Break the military balance in East Asia —→ Endanger the regional security	1. Lifting the arms embargo —→ The application of the Code of Conduct —→ No increase in arms sales to China —→ No challenge to the regional security
2. Transatlantic breach: knowing the US concern but still intending to do it.	2. ‘Symbolic gesture’ to China: improving EU-China relations should not necessarily harm transatlantic relations.
3. No human rights improvements	3. Some improvements in human rights, but not enough.

The discord was ultimately because the US was considering this issue from a strategic perspective, whilst the EU was considering it at the technical level. While the US was emphasising the potential strategic threats, the EU was claiming that their protocol should prevent any undesirable outcomes. Their signals were asymmetric and unmatched, so clearly no mutual understanding would be achieved. Then why did this asymmetry exist? Because the EU was *not* the US, it did not (could not) think in the way the US did.

This asymmetric debate created unease on the US side; what worried the US further was a new potential breach in the transatlantic relationship—it seemed that the EU was leaning towards the Chinese market and leaving US strategies behind.⁶⁹² In this regard, US officials expressed their discontent and could not understand why the Europeans were still considering lifting the embargo, even though they knew of US concerns.⁶⁹³ But knowing is not sharing; the EU was not in the US’s position that it had to worry about East Asian security, and the EU was *not* the

⁶⁹² Frank Umbach, “EU’s Links with China Pose New Threat to Transatlantic Relations”, *European Affairs*, (2004)5(2), available at <https://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/component/content/article/33-european-affairs/spring-2004/282-eus-links-with-china-pose-new-threat-to-transatlantic-relations>. (accessed 7 January 2017).

⁶⁹³ Spiegel, Peter. “US moves to stop EU lifting arms embargo”, 1 April 2004, *Financial Times* via *Factiva*.

US in that it had to fully embrace the American strategies, but an international entity with its own initiatives.

The EU's insensitivity to US concerns provoked severe US criticism of the EU. Observers challenged the EU's reasons for potentially lifting the embargo, and refuted them one after another, from the 'outdated' quality of the embargo to the improvements in China's human rights record.⁶⁹⁴ Ultimately, Shambaugh asked a 'simple question': 'why is it in Europe's strategic interest to accelerate the modernization of China's military', a question which he answered himself: 'It is not'.⁶⁹⁵ But Shambaugh is not a European, and he was asking this questions from an American perspective, and his question about China's military modernization was not so much of a concern to the Europeans as it was to the Americans. After all, as Chris Patten noted, 'it is America, not Europe, that guarantees stability in Asia'.⁶⁹⁶ Most importantly, the reason that the EU did not share the US's concern was that the two had different identities in terms of security. As demonstrated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, the EU was a normative power with civilian means, but *not* a hard security power like the US and therefore, as its diplomatic dimension was not military-driven, it was natural for the EU to put other aspects of their relations with China (commercial interests, for instance) ahead of security. Furthermore, due to historical and geopolitical reasons, the European states had much fewer initiatives in East Asian security than the US at that time.⁶⁹⁷ Unlike the US, the European states did not represent a hegemonic power in global politics, and unlike China's East Asian neighbours, the European states were quite distant in terms of geopolitics; therefore, the European states did not really have any direct security interests that were potentially challenged by a rise in China's military prowess. These different identities created fundamentally divergent starting points for the EU and the US.

⁶⁹⁴ David Shambaugh, "Don't lift the arms embargo on China", Brookings, 23 February 2005, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/dont-lift-the-arms-embargo-on-china/>. See also Peter Brookes, "The Lifting of the EU Arms Embargo on China: An American Perspective", The Heritage Foundation, 2 March 2005, available at <http://www.heritage.org/europe/report/the-lifting-the-eu-arms-embargo-china-american-perspective>; and John Tkacik, "Washington Must Head Off European Arms Sales to China", The Heritage Foundation, 18 March 2004, available at <http://www.heritage.org/asia/report/washington-must-head-european-arms-sales-china#pgfId-1104835>. (assessed 9 January 2017).

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. Shambaugh, 2005.

⁶⁹⁶ Chris Patten, "Meanwhile, Asia Rises", in *Not Quite the Diplomat: Home Truths about World Affairs*, (Penguin Books UK, 2005), 277.

⁶⁹⁷ David Shambaugh, "European and American Approaches to China: Different Beds, Same Dreams?," Sigur Center for Asian Studies, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University, (2002) 2. Actually Shambaugh knows it well that East Asia weights differently in the EU and US foreign policy, but unfortunately "forgot" to take this insight into his later work.

So, if Shambaugh had thrown his question open to East Asian actors such as Japan or Taiwan, who had the military competence and shared US regional security concerns regarding China, he might have gained a satisfactory answer. But when the EU states were considering their commercial interests and evolving relations with China, asking them to consider the geopolitical and military perspective only showed his ignorance of the identities of his audiences, which is the EU but not East Asian countries.

For the EU, it was clear that building up China's military muscle was not the purpose of lifting the embargo. Indeed, the European military industry has determined the value of the Chinese arms market, which could bring them considerable profit. But even if the embargo were to be lifted, they would still have to face fierce competition from Russian arms suppliers in the Chinese arms market.⁶⁹⁸ Therefore, strengthening China's military power was neither the purpose nor the consequence of the removal of the embargo. For the EU, it was more of a symbolic signal, conveyed to China, which was aimed at constructing a positive dynamic to boost commercial relations.⁶⁹⁹ However, this initiative was misperceived as having a different dimension by the US, and this resulted in the intense transatlantic debate. From an outsider's perspective, it was understandable to see why the EU felt the need to lift the embargo, and why the US opposed this so strongly, but for the two actors who were in the debate, they were distinct actors who had their own initiatives; therefore, it was difficult to consider each other's position and construct a consensus.

6.5.4 Summary

This section has analysed how China, the EU and the US discussed the proposal to lift the arms embargo. It has demonstrated that China's proposal to lift the embargo was not merely a symbolic motion, but an initiative to seek political support and strategic trust in exchange for its economic charms. The proposal was also based on the Chinese perception of the EU as

⁶⁹⁸ Richard A. Bitzinger, "A Prisoner's Dilemma: The EU's China Arms Embargo", *China Brief*, (2004)4(13), The Jamestown Foundation, available at <https://jamestown.org/program/a-prisoners-dilemma-the-eus-china-arms-embargo/>. (accessed 9 January 2017).

⁶⁹⁹ Pascal Vennesson, "Lifting the EU Arms Embargo on China: Symbols and Strategy", 417-444.

being a different international actor to the US, and on the expectation that the EU could be able to form its foreign policy independently.

To certain extent, the debate across the Atlantic demonstrated that the EU was prepared to act independently. The EU asserted the validity of the procedure to replace the embargo with an upgraded Code of Conduct, which would be applied to effectively control the export of arms to China. It also clarified that its intention was to intensify the strategic relationship—specifically commercial relations—with China, rather than increasing arms sales to China. It even held a relatively modest perception—compared to the US’s complete negation—on China’s human rights records. All of these indicated that the EU was *not* the US, but an actor with its own initiatives to which it was willing to adhere.

But the EU’s stance on this issue would never be simplified, as in contrast, it was complexly divided internally. As analysed in Chapter 3, the EU is a normative power, but nevertheless has multifaceted initiatives as well. Member states upgraded the commercial needs to the EU level, the EU executive institutions would also have established a positive relationship with China on the basis of the communication mechanisms, and therefore there were supporters who would have liked to see the embargo lifted and an evolving EU-China relationship. But the normative characteristics of the EU forced it to take the opposite stance in this campaign. Normative interests, as equally concrete as the commercial interests, ultimately took precedent at the EU level.

Until February 2005, the EU’s opposition was mainly based on normative principles, and it was largely different from the US’s opposition which was mainly based on strategic concerns. This also showed that the EU was *not* the US, even when it was forced to adopt an opposing stance to China’s proposal. But the issue of the Chinese Anti-Secession Law changed the dynamic, in addition to the normative identities, the EU was reminded that it was/should be an actor related to the US, and the result of the arms embargo campaign was thereby determined.

6.6 Why it was not lifted?

The campaign for lifting the embargo was postponed by the EU in mid-2005, and this topic was no longer included on the political agenda at the European Council meeting in June and December 2005. It was believed that increasing pressure from the US was the main reason for ending this campaign.⁷⁰⁰ Others indicated that the Anti-Secession Law (ASL) that was passed by China was the reason for the EU deferring its decision.⁷⁰¹ There were also researchers who considered both to be the factors that resulted in the failure of the campaign.⁷⁰²

Here it is necessary to explore China's motivation in passing the ASL at the key stage of lifting the arms embargo. Because without the adoption of the ASL, there might be less oppositions in lifting the embargo. Then why did China have to approve the ASL at such a moment when it was trying to persuade the EU to end the embargo? As demonstrated in chapter 2, China is also a multifaceted actor in pursuing its national interests which originate from diverse dimensions. Within these national interests, China has defined some core interests, and 'state sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and national reunification' are considered one of the core interests.⁷⁰³ Even though the content of the core interests is very debatable,⁷⁰⁴ one thing is sure that Taiwan lies in China's core interests as it concerns the core interests mentioned above.⁷⁰⁵ After Chen Shui-bian had been elected again as the President of the Republic of China in 2004, the tension mounted across the Taiwan Strait. While China was trying to lift the embargo on the European side, it was also facing a great challenge from

⁷⁰⁰ Terry Narramore, "China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy"; Nicola Casarini, "The International Politics of the Chinese Arms Embargo Issue".

⁷⁰¹ Tang Shao Cheng. "The EU's Policy towards China and the Arms Embargo"; Dinmore, Guy. "EU fails to sway US on China arms ban", 15 March 2005, Financial Times, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/6bc7f458-9582-11d9-bc72-00000e2511c8>. (accessed 15 February 2017).

⁷⁰² Bates Gill, "The United States and the China-Europe relationship", 271-273; Vennesson, Pascal. "Lifting the EU Arms Embargo on China: Symbols and Strategy".

⁷⁰³ *White Paper on China's peaceful development* (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, Sept. 2011), available at http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/2011/Document/1000031/1000031_3.htm, accessed 13 December 2018.

⁷⁰⁴ Zeng Jinghan, Xiao Yuefan, and Shaun Breslin. "Securing China's core interests: the state of the debate in China." *International Affairs* 91, no. 2 (2015): 245-266; Wang Gonglong, "国家核心利益及其界定 (Core National Interests and Their Definition)." *Journal of Shanghai Administration Institute*, 12:6 (2011): 75-82.

⁷⁰⁵ Chinese leaders had asserted that Taiwan is one part of China's core interests. For example, Hu Jintao, "建设相互尊重、互利共赢的中美合作伙伴关系 (Building the Sino-US Partnership with mutual respects and reciprocal benefits)", *People's Daily Online*, available at <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1024/13784588.html>, accessed 13 December 2018; Xi Jinping, "台湾问题是中国的内政, 不容任何外来干涉 (The Taiwan issue is China's domestic politics, and does not allow any external intervention.)", Xinhua Net, available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2019-01/02/c_1123937309.htm, accessed 3 January 2019.

Taiwan's attempts towards independence. Under such conditions, either driven by nationalism or the needs to adopt an updated Taiwan policy,⁷⁰⁶ the necessity to enact the ASL had been prioritised over the intention to lift the embargo in that period. Quite simply, the Taiwan issue was deemed to be more pressing and more important than relations with Europe.

However, this chapter argues that the US pressure and the ASL were not the immediate reasons that affected the EU's decision: the US pressure had been imposed on the EU ever since the beginning of this campaign, but the EU still defended its stance with reasonable initiatives; moreover, the ASL did not directly concern the EU in terms of geopolitics. What mattered to the EU was its assessment of its own identity in the triangle relations with the US and China. The US side repeatedly emphasised the EU's identity as allies of the US, but meanwhile China's lobbying urged the EU to value its identity as a mutual 'strategic partner'. While these two identities clashed with each other, the EU had to evaluate them and make a choice. This section will explore the clash between the EU's identities, and the consequence of the EU's choice—how China subsequently perceived the EU and how this would affect ongoing EU-China relations.

6.6.1 The clash of the EU's identities

While the EU tried to strengthen its identity as a strategic partner of China by attempting to lift the embargo, it also faced the risk of undermining its identity as a credible partner of the US, specifically in the regard to security. Consequently, despite the EU's defence of its initiatives on China, it did not intend to provoke a new tension with the US in addition to the divisions over the Iraq War. The clash of these two identities constructed the main drive in the EU's policy making, and the outcome of this competition of identities would decide the result of the arms embargo campaign.

President Bush and Secretary Rice's visit to Europe was seen as a 'carefully choreographed act' to demonstrate a willingness to repair the transatlantic rift after the Iraq crisis. The signal

⁷⁰⁶ Zhao Suisheng. "Conflict prevention across the Taiwan Strait and the making of China's anti-secession law." *Asian Perspective* (2006): 79-94; Ji You. "China's anti-secession law and the risk of war in the Taiwan Strait." *Contemporary Security Policy* 27, no. 2 (2006): 237-257.

was well received and welcomed by the EU, as some officials showed a ‘positive expectation’ to put the previous tensions behind them and rebuild the partnership.⁷⁰⁷ But to be fair, the EU were also vocal in promoting their partnership with China, so the enthusiasm towards the US could not solely explain the EU’s decision regarding the embargo.

As discussed above, the EU has fewer geopolitical concerns with China in East Asia compared with the US. This is constructive for the EU and China to build a relationship without resulting in direct confrontation in the region. However, it also means that they lack a certain kind of link in their relationship. On the contrary, the EU has a deeper connection with the US in terms of security, which can be attributed to the overlapped identities of the EU member states who are also members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As member states of the EU, they were interested in the commercial advantages that could be gained through a strengthened EU-China relationship, but as NATO members they were reluctant to further weaken transatlantic ties by agreeing to lift the embargo. These two identities were clearly in direct conflict with each other during the decision-making process regarding the issue of the embargo.

There were 21 European states who shared both identities in 2005,⁷⁰⁸ and even though some of these states still preferred to lift the embargo in favour of the EU-China relationship, there were indeed some countries who assured US officials that they would take US concerns into account.⁷⁰⁹ Because, while they were aware of the benefits of making favourable gestures to China, they were also risking the potential loss of the reliance of the US, and thereby faced restrictions in their transatlantic military and technological cooperation. From the US perspective, even though the European members had a few concrete interests of their own in East Asia, sharing US concerns in that region should be considered the most credible of such strong allies. Somehow this clash of identities became a zero-sum calculation for the European

⁷⁰⁷ Glenn Kessler and Robin Wright, “Europe Keen to Leave Tensions in the Past”, *Washington Post, The*, 2 February 2005, n.d., Regional Business News, EBSCOhost, Accession Number: WPT041183519005. (assessed 26 January 2017)

⁷⁰⁸ They were Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and United Kingdom. Croatia joined the NATO in 2009 and the EU in 2013.

⁷⁰⁹ For instance, “Netherlands/EU China arms embargo: briefing for Dutch officials”, *WikiLeaks*, 22 July 2004; “EU Arms embargo: Italy wearing poker face”, *WikiLeaks*, 5 April 2004, Canonical ID: 04ROME1342_a, available at https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/04ROME1342_a.html. (assessed 28 January 2017).

members (both of the EU and NATO), the enhancement of their profiles in China would mean the reduction of their credibility in the US.

The clash of identities shifted the dynamic towards the US. While the EU still had the intention to lift the embargo, it had acknowledged that it was crucial to gain an ‘accommodation’ with the US before any decision was made.⁷¹⁰ To this end, the EU dispatched a delegation to Washington in mid-March 2005 to mitigate US concerns by explaining the EU’s intentions and assuring them of the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct.⁷¹¹ However, this mission was interrupted by China’s adoption of the ‘Anti-Secession Law’, which declared that non-peaceful means could be employed as the final and extreme measure to prevent Taiwan from seceding.⁷¹²

The Anti-Secession Law accelerated the EU’s shift on its stance towards the US’s favoured outcome. Firstly, it stimulated the EU’s nerve as a normative power, which was the exact reason that prohibited the EU from lifting the embargo. Even though the EU has few geopolitical interests in terms of East Asian security, it should be noted that there is a subtle difference between the concepts of ‘military balance’ and ‘regional stability’ in the EU’s perception. The EU might not be as concerned as the US in terms of the regional military balance, but securing regional stability was considered part of the EU’s credibility as a responsible international actor, and this kind of credibility was regarded as one of its normative criteria as far as the EU was concerned. As a reaction to the ASL, in the EP’s report in March 2005, it made the accusation that the ASL had exacerbated the cross-strait situation in ‘an unjustified way’, and called on both parties across the strait to ‘promote stability, democracy, human rights and the rule of law in East Asia’.⁷¹³ Public opposition had also been inflamed as a response to the ASL, as major

⁷¹⁰ “Is the EU retreating on the China arms embargo?”, *WikiLeaks*, 24 March 2005, Canonical ID:05BRUSSELS1231_a, available at https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05BRUSSELS1231_a.html. (assessed 28 January 2017).

⁷¹¹ Dinmore, Guy, “EU fails to sway US on China arms ban”.

⁷¹² Article 8, “Full text of Anti-Secession Law”, *Xinhua Net*, 14 March 2005, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-03/14/content_2694180.htm (assessed 5 February 2017)

⁷¹³ Article 33, “Report on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of CFSP, including the financial implications for the general budget of the European Communities – 2003 (8412/2004 - 2004/2172(INI))”, Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament, 21 March 2005, FINAL A6-0062/2005. **Please NOTE**, here the EP put “stability” together with other normative principles such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law; in other words, when it appealed for stability, it also attached other norms in order to sell them in a full pack. This implied that “stability” was one of the EU’s

political editorial boards, think tanks and NGOs voiced their stances against lifting the embargo.⁷¹⁴ Consequently, the EU would face fierce domestic and parliamentary pressure if it decided to lift the embargo in such circumstances; as British Foreign Secretary Straw said, the adoption of the ASL had ‘created quite a difficult political environment’.⁷¹⁵ Furthermore, instructing China to integrate into the international society and be a responsible actor was the EU’s diplomatic strategy towards China, but the adoption of the ASL eroded China’s peaceful image in the EU’s eyes and, furthermore, it seemed to represent a retreat from the EU’s achievements in engaging China, thus the EU had to reconsider its approach.

Secondly, the ASL reminded the EU members’ identities of their US allies by reinforcing the validity of US concerns about East Asian security. It is important here to clarify the identity of the US’s ally. The EU itself was not the US’s military ally, but the 21 member states of the EU who shared the identities of the US’s allies under the framework of NATO. However, with regards to the case of the arms embargo on China, it was the EU’s 12 member states who imposed the sanction on China in 1989 at Madrid under the framework of the European Communities. Therefore, to lift the embargo, this had to be ratified under the framework of the EU. Back then it was a sanction in the normative form, which was in order to criticize China’s human rights situation, but now the US had characterized it as having military and security implications. So, while this issue had to be resolved under the EU framework, it involved the member states’ military identities as US’s allies within NATO, and this is the reason to call it the ‘clash’ of the identities, it does not purely entail the involvement of the member states’ ‘EU identities’, but also their ‘NATO identities’.

The ASL raised tensions in East Asia by illustrating a very extreme, but not impossible, scenario whereby the two sides across the Taiwan Strait could be drawn into a war, which is a war that would likely draw the US and its East Asian ally Japan in as well.⁷¹⁶ Thus, the US’s

normative principles, because in fact the EU itself did not have the military power to incorporate regional stability as its security interest, and therefore the “stability” initiative could solely be a normative appeal. But do not misunderstand, this normative appeal indeed had implications in this issue, and effectively affected the EU’s decision in a normative way.

⁷¹⁴ “Is the EU retreating on the China arms embargo?”, *WikiLeaks*, 24 March 2005.

⁷¹⁵ Judy Dempsey. “EU feels the heat on China embargo”, *International Herald Tribune*, 23 March 2005, available at <http://taiwandc.org/ihl-2005-09.htm>. (accessed 12 February 2017).

⁷¹⁶ Frans Paul Van der Putten, “The EU Arms Embargo against China: Should Europe Play a Role in East Asian Security?”, *Social and Cultural Research*, Occasional paper No. 7, 2009.

warning that lifting the embargo would harm the US and its East Asian allies' military interests was suddenly demonstrated by this scenario—there might be a war in East Asia, and the reinforcement of China's military power, as supplied by the Europeans, would cause direct damage to the US and its allies' forces. Despite this being outside China's intentions and expectations, the adoption of the ASL had somehow served to strengthen US opposition. In such an atmosphere, the US's allies in Europe had to reconsider their stances on the embargo. Lifting it and ignoring its allies' concerns would not only harm its credibility, but also the EU's interests in terms of security cooperation with the US.

The clash of the identities ended up with a 'victory' that belonged to the identities related to the US. The EU postponed the arms embargo campaign at the European Council meeting in June 2005, even though China persevered in raising the issue after this time;⁷¹⁷ however, the issue has not been discussed as seriously as this time, and the arms embargo remained in place even since. In the next generation of Chinese government, the arms embargo has not been further raised as an issue in EU-China relations.

6.6.2 The EU in China's eyes: still something related to the US

The outcome of the campaign for lifting the embargo had changed Chinese observers' previous perception of the EU. Between 2005 and 2007, 20 articles analysed reasons why the embargo was not lifted, and 18 articles argued that US opposition was the decisive reason preventing the EU from lifting the embargo, as the US can impose a tight grip on the EU's decision making (in terms of security).⁷¹⁸ Some mentioned the impact of the adoption of the ASL, but only

⁷¹⁷ For instance, in 2006 and 2012, the then Chinese Premier Minister Wen Jiabao repeatedly urged the EU to lift the arms embargo. See Spongenberg, Helena. "China asks EU to lift arms embargo", *EUobserver*, 6 September 2006, available at <https://euobserver.com/news/22345> and "China premier Wen Jiabao urges end to EU arms embargo", *BBC News*, 20 September 2012, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19657940>. (assessed 11 February 2017)

⁷¹⁸ Huang, Dong. "欧盟解除对华武器禁运事件中的美国因素 (The US factor in the EU's arms embargo on China)", *Foreign Affairs Review*, (2010), vol.5: 91-102; Feng, Zhongping. "如何推动中欧关系深入发展 (Explaining the Sino-EU Strategic Partnership)", *Foreign Affairs Review*, 2006, Vol.5:16-21; see also Feng, Zhongping. "欧盟为何不解禁 (Why the EU did not lift the arms embargo)", *World Affairs*, 2005, Vol.9, p.66; Cheng, Hongliang. "欧盟对华军售难以解禁的背景综述 (Reasons of the EU's failure to lift the arms embargo on China)", *International Data Information*, 2005, Vol.7:30-31; Wang, Xinhua., Xu, Gang. "欧盟对华军售解禁: 主要症结与影响 (EU's lifting the arms embargo on China: Crucial reason and influence)", *Military Economic Research*, 2005, Vol.8: 67-71; Wang, Hongwei. "欧盟对华军售解禁问题分析 (Analysis on the EU's arms embargo on China)", *China Ordnance Industry*, (2005) 6: 58-60; Liu, Deshou. "美欧关系与欧盟对

considered it as a factor that strengthened the US opposing stance.⁷¹⁹ To sum up the above ideas, Chinese observers emphasized the US influence and perceived the EU as something still related to the US.

As mentioned above, at the beginning of the arms embargo campaign, Chinese observers expected the EU to act independently, and demonstrate its autonomy in decision making and, moreover, this could even be seen as a sign that the EU had the desire and capability to build a multipolar world. However, from the perspective of the outcome of this campaign, despite the EU's differences with the US, and in its defence on its own initiatives, in the end the EU was still something related to the US. But to be cautiously precise on this conclusion, it was not *the EU* itself that was related to the US, but those of its member states who were allies of the US in through NATO. As discussed in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1, the EU's competence in security is limited, therefore the member states have to rely on the US when it comes to such matters. And precisely because of the US efforts, the embargo campaign became inextricably combined

华军售解禁 (US-European Relations and the Lifting of Arms Embargo against China by the EU)", *International Forum*, 2007, Vol. 1:16-20; Chen, Yan. "欧盟解除对华军售禁令前景 (Prospects for EU's lifting the Ban of Arms Sales to China)", *Peace and Development*, 2005, Vol.1: 20-54; Zhang, Jincui. "欧盟解除对华军售禁令为何难产? (Why the EU's Removal of the Ban on Weapon Sales to China Is Slow in Coming?)", *Peace and Development*, 2006, Vol. 3: 46-49; see also Zhang, Jincui. "欧盟解除对华军售禁令再探讨 (Further analysis of the EU's arms embargo on China)", *Lanzhou Academic Journal*, 2007, Vol.7: 51-54; Liu, Xuelian., Zhang, Juan. "欧盟对华军售禁令: 历史、多方博弈与前景 (The EU's arms embargo on China: history, multiple-game and the prospect)", *Theory Monthly*, 2008, Vol. 3: 140-142; Zhang, Rui., He, Qisong. "解析美国全球阻止对华军售 (Analysis on the US's prevention on arms sales to China in the global context)", *Study Monthly*, 2005, Vol.11: 34-35; Wu, Liming. "欧盟解除对华军售禁令的分歧与妥协 (The EU's arms embargo on China: divergence and compromise)", *Outlook*, 2004, Vol. 42: 49-50; Liu, Jiansheng. "欧盟何时解除对华军售禁令 (When will the EU lift the arms embargo on China?)", *Outlook*, 2005, Vol. 14: 49-50; Hou, Yuhong. "欧盟对华军售禁令的"破解"与"反解" (The EU's arms embargo on China: supports and objections)", *The Contemporary World*, 2005, Vol. 2: 20-22; Ding, Sheng. "欧盟对华军售难以解禁的原因及其影响 (The EU's predicament to lift the arms embargo on China: the reasons and influence)", *Legal System and Society*, 2011, Vol.16: 145-146; Liu, Xiaoping. "欧盟对华军售禁令与欧中关系发展 (The EU's arms embargo on China and the development of the EU-China relationship)", *Forum of World Economics and Politics*, 2006, Vol. 1: 101-104; Jiang, Huaiyu., Ren, Dashun. "试论中欧关系发展中的美国因素 (Analysing the US's influence on China-EU relations)", *Journal of Suihua University*, 2006, Vol.4:33-35. There were only two articles mainly focused on the EU's mechanism in giving consent to lift the embargo, and argued that the EU had limitations in producing a coherent policy in this regard, see Chen, Zhimin. "欧盟的有限战略行为主体特性与中欧战略合作伙伴关系——以解除对华军售禁令为例 (The Limits of EU as a Strategic Actor and EU-China Strategic Partnership: The Case of Ending EU's Arms Embargo on China)", *International Review*, (2006) 5: 1-10; Dai Bingran, "欧盟对华军售解禁前景展望 (The prospect on lifting the EU's arms embargo on China)", *Social Sciences Digest* 10, (2005): 60.

⁷¹⁹ Cheng, Hongliang. "欧盟对华军售难以解禁的背景综述 (Reasons of the EU's failure to lift the arms embargo on China)", *International Data Information*, 2005, Vol.7:30-31; Feng, Zhongping. "欧盟为何不解禁 (Why the EU did not lift the arms embargo)", *World Affairs*, 2005, Vol.9, p.66.

with security attributes, thus the member states had two identities to balance. Because this campaign was processed in the EU framework, it seemed that the EU was also bound to the US.

Although the campaign to lift the embargo had been stopped through the involvement of the US, the outcome of this case changed Chinese understanding of EU-China relations: the perception of the EU's identity had been enriched, and instead of focusing on its instrumental role of balancing the US hegemony, Chinese observers placed more attention on the EU itself, for instance, its 'soft power' in global governance, its integration experiences, its active role in multilateral organizations, and so forth.⁷²⁰ The enrichment of the perception of the EU's identities also expanded the EU-China relationship to a triangle relationship consisting of China, the EU and the US. The triangle relationship fostered a dynamic in which they interacted on the basis of competition and cooperation. In such a dynamic, China realised that the EU still shared common interests with the US in various areas, therefore it was not practical to expect that the EU could be a power to challenge the US hegemony. Moreover, none of the three would be isolated or constrained in this dynamic, because where there was competition in some areas, there was cooperation in others.⁷²¹ Consequently, in terms of the bilateral relationship

⁷²⁰ Feng, Zhongping. "中国对欧盟政策文件初析 (An Analysis of China's EU Policy Paper)", *Journal of China Foreign Affairs University*, 2004, Vol.1: 49-53; Chen, Zhimin., Zhang, Ji. "'新、老欧洲'与美欧关系 ('New Europe', 'Old Europe' and the relationship between the US and Europe)", *Contemporary World*, 2008, Vol.2: 14-16; Zhai, Dongsheng. "中美欧三边关系 (Triangle relations of China, the US and Europe)", *CEOCIO China*, 2006, Vol. 24, p.96; Wu, Baiyi. "观念转变与内生动力——后冷战时期中欧关系本源初探 (Changed Perceptions vis-à-vis Pragmatical Incentives: An Analysis of Root Causes of the Sino-EU Relations)", *Chinese Journal of European Studies*, 2006, Vol.1:17-38;

⁷²¹ Chen, Zhimin. "中国、美国和欧洲：新三边关系中的合作与竞争 (China, the US and Europe: cooperation and competition in the new triangle relations)", *World Economics and Politics*, 2010, vol. 1:5-22; see also Chen, Zhimin. "欧盟外交战略的新方向 (The new dimension of the EU's diplomatic strategy)", *The Contemporary World*, 2007, Vol. 8: 23-25; Wu, Baiyi. "中国——欧洲：在国际体系变动中 (China and Europe in the transforming international system)", *World Affairs*, 2005, Vol.23:41-43; Zhao, Huaipu. "当前美欧关系：大趋势与新变化 (Current US-European Relations: the grand tendency and the new changes)", *Contemporary International Relation*, 2008, Vol.2:40-46; also Zhao, Huaipu. "当前中欧关系浅析 (An Analysis of the Current China-EU Relations)", *Foreign Affairs Review*, 2008, Vol.5: 17-24; Liu, Deshou. "美欧关系的变化与趋势 (The changes and the tendency of the US-European relations)", *Contemporary World*, 2008, Vol.2:11-13; Xing, Hua. "跌宕起伏的美欧关系 (U.S.-European Relations with Ups and Downs)", *International Studies*, 2007, Vol.2: 32-36; Wang, Xuejun. "冷战后欧美联盟的动力与趋势 (Motives and Trend of EU-US Alliance after the Cold War)", *Teaching and Research*, 2007, Vol.7: 67-72; Li, Hua. "中欧关系评析 (Analysing the China-EU relationship)", *International Studies*, 2005, Vol.6:13-18; Wang, Yi. "中欧美互动及三边合作的可能性 (The interaction among China, the EU and the US and the possibility for triangle cooperation)", *International Studies*, 2013, Vol.2:37-48; Zhang, Jian. "欧美关系的新变化及前景 (The new changes and prospects in EU-US relations)", *Contemporary International Relations*, 2009, Vol.6:29-34; Wang, Fang. "新布什主义下的欧美关系 (The Relationship between Europe and America under the Background of New Bushianism)", *Journal of*

between the EU and China, they would play the roles of both competitors and partners in the future, and as mentioned in 4.3.4 of Chapter 4, this would be evidenced by their role identities of ‘critical friends’.

Furthermore, the case of arms embargo gave China a clearer perception of the complexity of the EU’s identities. The EU is a multifaceted entity with diverse interests, it has demands for commercial profits, and also has the need to uphold normative principles; furthermore, it consists of member states who each have their own security concerns. Because of its supranational characteristics, all these national initiatives will be uploaded and calculated at the EU level, therefore, ignoring or one-sidedly emphasising a single initiative would inappropriately deploy diplomatic resources and fail to achieve the goal. For instance, China did not pay enough attention to the EU’s normative demands, as it did not ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as the EU suggested. Instead, it expended considerable resources in pleasing individual powerhouses—such as France and Germany—by signing large contracts, and hoping the associated commercial benefits would help to facilitate meeting China’s needs. But the efforts in this regard did not work out because the two sides’ demands were not completely matched.

6.7 Comparison between different approaches

After applying a Constructivist approach in analysing the arms embargo case, it is necessary to explore how other approaches, namely that Realist, Liberal and English School approaches, would produce the narratives of this issue. Through the comparison between different approaches, this section aims to provide a link back to the theoretical framework in chapter 3, and to show the contribution of conventional theories and the value added by the Constructivist approach.

Neorealism dominated analyses of the arms embargo issue. As mentioned in section 6.6.2, almost 90% of Chinese analyses highlighted the US power in deterring the lifting of the

China Youth College For Political Sciences, 2005, Vol.6:50-53; Gao, Hua. “中欧关系的进展与挑战 (Progress Made in China-EU Relationship and Challenges to be Faced with)”, *Peace and Development*, 2006, Vol.1:53-55.

embargo. They argued that China's purchase of European weapons would break the balance of power across the Taiwan Strait, and thereby damage the US security in that region.⁷²² In terms of analysing the motivation for China to propose to lift the embargo, Chinese scholars also believed that it was the emerging multipolar system that drove China to build a closer relationship with the EU. Therefore, the lifting of the embargo was seen as a symbol to show that the EU was different from the US, and was an independent actor capable of making autonomous decisions.⁷²³ This approach was not only used by Chinese scholars, but also adopted by European scholars.⁷²⁴ By applying the Neorealist approach, scholars had successfully explained actors' motivations in seeking power (China and the EU) and preventing the re-allocation of power (the US).

Liberal and English School approaches have not been applied in the embargo case. But they had been widely used in analysing EU-China relations in many other respects. As discussed in section 3.2.3, liberal approaches were functional in analysing the commercial cooperation and norms diffusion in the bilateral relationship. With regard to the English School, it could contribute in demonstrating different understandings of norms (mainly human rights) between the EU and China, and then explain why these different ideas stopped the EU from lifting the embargo.

While acknowledging the contribution of conventional theories, this thesis has applied a Constructivist approach. By taking an in-depth investigation of Chinese language literatures, this approach contributed in understanding the role identities of the EU and China. In contrast to the Neorealist emphasis on the function of the international system, the Constructivist believes that actors' interests are based on their own perceptions of identities. Therefore, this approach has focused on actors' perceptions, which explain what the actor really wants. It has laid out a process which explicitly shows how Chinese perceptions of the EU has changed.

⁷²² Ibid 626.

⁷²³ Ibid 532.

⁷²⁴ Frans Paul Van der Putten, "The EU Arms Embargo against China: Should Europe Play a Role in East Asian Security?", *Social and Cultural Research*, Occasional paper No. 7, 2009; Terry Narramore, "China and Europe: engagement, multipolarity and strategy"; Nicola Casarini, "The International Politics of the Chinese Arms Embargo Issue"; Shao Cheng Tang, "The EU's policy towards China and the arms embargo", *Asia Europe Journal*, 313-321;

The change of perception has resulted in the alteration of identities and interests, and eventually the variation of the relationship.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the case of the Chinese arms embargo, and demonstrated how identity played a decisive role in the associated interaction between the EU, China and the US. It began by introducing the research methods, which is designed to embody a developed analysis on the Chinese language sources, and to show how they contribute to understanding Chinese perceptions and motivations. The analysis through out this chapter focused on the changing of perceptions, and it gave extra attention to changes at key stages of the embargo campaign, for example, what was China's motivation behind introducing the ASL at a critical moment. On the basis that has been laid out by conventional theories, this chapter has applied a constructivist approach which helps to understand the actors' perceptions and identities.

The identities that were studied in this chapter consisted of type identities that were analysed in chapter 3 and role identities that were explored in chapter 4. Type identities revealed the actors' inner qualities and explained their preferences towards certain interests, and which determined the way they perceived the outside world and others. Role identities outlined the dynamics among actors and shaped their behavioural patterns in these dynamics, as analysed in section 4.2.2.2. The actor's behaviour is shaped by its interests, and its interests are defined by its identity. chapter 3 demonstrated the main type identities in EU-China relations, which would serve to explain the identities that were studied in this chapter. chapter 4 introduced role identity, and explained the mechanism by which it could influence interests and behaviours by reviewing the development of the bilateral relationship. These previous chapters have built a comprehensive foundation for this case study, and this case study has integrated these identities and used them to analyse how they have a considerable impact on the interactions between/among actors.

Specifically, there were two type identities. One was China's type identity as a rising power. As a rising power, China faced pressure from the US hegemony, and to some extent it felt the need to bring reforms to the international society (see 3.3.2.1 in Chapter 3). Therefore, as shown

by the investigation of the Chinese language literature, China expected that the EU could act as a pole to constrain US power, this perception and expectation of the EU originating from China's type identity as a rising power, and lifting the arms embargo would undoubtedly have been a breakthrough to intensifying the ties between the EU and China and showing that the EU was, in fact, independent of the US. For the EU, China's identity as a rising power was mainly economically oriented. Strengthening the relationship meant intensifying commercial ties and economic cooperation. Consequently, China's type identity as a rising power was a decisive reason for both sides to initiate the lifting of the embargo. But, it should be noted, the two actors' perceptions of each other in this regard were asymmetric; furthermore, China had a mistaken perception of the EU's 'willingness to be a pole to challenge the US hegemony'. Therefore, in all likelihood the factor that led to the failure of the campaign was present at its outset.

The other type identity was the EU's identity as a normative power. This identity was one of the reasons that the embargo was not lifted. The normative preferences arose from all over Europe, from member states to institutions. This normative identity clashed with the preferences that intended to lift the embargo to promote bilateral commercial ties. But, eventually, it played a critical role in prohibiting the policy makers from prioritizing their commercial interests over normative principles, thus it exactly explained how identity defined/redefined the actor's interests and thereby shaped its behaviours.

With regards to role identities, there were three dimensions: firstly, the EU and China were maturing partners. In such an atmosphere, eliminating obstacles to the relationship was a reasonable move to strengthen the ties between them. Besides, it is an instinct for international actors to pursue mutual economic/political interests. Through lifting the embargo, China could gain political support, and the EU could acquire increased commercial benefits in exchange; under these conditions, this was a logical proposal for both parties to process.

Secondly, the EU was *not* the US. In China's eyes, the EU was a different power from the US. This perception of the EU was based on China's own type identity (as mentioned above), but also originated from the EU's multilateralism. This perception was even reinforced in its

contrasting position to the US's unilateralism in the War of Iraq, thus the dynamic in 2003 provided the possibility for China to make the proposal to lift the embargo. For the EU itself, it did show its desire for pursuing its own initiatives independently. Solely from its own viewpoint, the EU was interested in negotiating the arms embargo for the sake of promoting EU-China relations. Moreover, unlike the US, the EU was not a military power, it had few geopolitical interests in East Asian's regional security, and was not challenged by China's rise in that region. This difference in terms of military identities has fundamentally shaped the different attitudes of the two parties.

But its attitude and interests in this case were reshaped in a third dimension, because, after all, the EU was still related to the US. The increasing pressure from the US made the EU afraid of creating a new breach on the transatlantic relationship after that of the Iraq Crisis. Strengthening the relationship with China was a right thing to do, but if it undermined the transatlantic relationship, was pursuing this still worthwhile? This became a question for the EU at the end of the campaign. The result proved that the identities of transatlantic partners were still highly valuable in the EU's calculations. The maintaining of the embargo was certainly not what China wished to see at the outset, but the realization that the EU was still related to the US did help China to build a clearer perception of the EU; Chinese observers realised the limitations to the EU's capacity to act as a completely autonomous international actor,⁷²⁵ and also lowered any expectations that the EU would act as a pole to restrain US hegemony.

This case study was constituted by three questions: (1) How did the proposal for lifting the embargo turn out? (2) How was it discussed? (3) And finally, why was the embargo not lifted? By summarizing the above, it was shown that identities critically influenced each process of the campaign: China's type identity as a rising power, the EU-China role identities as maturing partners, and the EU's different role from the US composed the reasons that triggered the generation of the proposal to lift the embargo. Furthermore, the EU's different role from the US and its normative identity formed the discussion of this proposal. Finally, the EU's role

⁷²⁵ Chen, Zhimin. "欧盟的有限战略行为主体特性与中欧战略伙伴关系——以解除对华军售禁令为例 (The Limits of EU as a Strategic Actor and EU-China Strategic Partnership: The Case of Ending EU's Arms Embargo on China)", *International Review*, (2006) 5: 1-10.

identity as a transatlantic partner led to the postponement of the proposal. In each process, identities functioned to define the actors' interests and thereby shaped their behaviours and, on the whole, the findings of this case study strongly supported the argument of this thesis: identity plays a decisive role in the interaction between actors.

Conclusion

Overview

This thesis has explored, how and to what extent, identity influences EU-China relations. It has answered the questions that have been laid down in the introductory chapter. In doing so, the thesis has confirmed the hypothesis as correct in the sense that identity is indeed the decisive factor that influences the bilateral relationship between the EU and China. In order to summarise the connection between the case study and other Chapters, this section will make an overview of the Chapters and demonstrate their contributions to the core argument.

In chapter 1, I have explored the EU's mechanism and competences in the domains of foreign and security policies and commercial policies. In each domain, I have examined the competence of the institutions and the initiatives of member states. Specifically, this chapter has discussed the competences of the HR, the Council, the Commission and the Parliament by demonstrating to what extent they can wield their power. It has also singled out the diverse dimensions of interests among the member states. In summary, this chapter has shown the nature of the EU as a hybrid entity consisting of multiple actors, and has emphasised that we need to see clearly who (the institutions) can do what, and who (member states) wants what. It is important to notice these diversities in studying the EU as the case study in chapter 6 demonstrated. Different attitudes towards the arms embargo draw a line between those who were in favour of commercial interests and those who insisted on normative principles.

In order to match the previous discussion on the complex nature of the EU as an international actor, chapter 2 has focused on the nature of China as an international actor and an interlocutor for the EU in particular. It has shown the complex features of China's foreign policy-making system by identifying various actors and their interests within it. Specifically, it studied the competences and preferences of the Politburo Standing Committee of the CPC, the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, major ministries, local governments and state-owned enterprises. Furthermore, this chapter has demonstrated the relationship between think tanks and the foreign policy-making system, which has laid down the basis for consulting the Chinese language resources in chapter 6. Moreover, this chapter has also explored the evolving features

in China's nature as an international actor, and addresses the challenges posed in analytical terms by the evolution of its nature.

Chapter 3 has presented the theoretical framework for the thesis. This chapter has critiqued the dominant approaches, namely realism, liberalism and the English School, that have been applied in studies of EU-China relations. Whilst recognising the contributions of these conventional theories in this regard, this chapter has indicated their imperfections in understanding the EU and China's perceptions and preferences. In light of this, this chapter has demonstrated the value added by a constructivist approach by clarifying the analytical logic of this thesis: 1) to analyse the relationship, we need to observe the actor's behaviour (what does it do); 2) to know why it behaves in that way, we need to understand the actor's interests (what does it want); and 3) to investigate what is the interest, we need to explore the actor's identity (what it is). In this logic, identity is the target and the destination of the research. Specifically, the question of 'what it is' consists of two sub-questions. The first is 'what sort of actor it is?', and it refers to type identity. The second is 'what it is in another's eyes?', and it refers to role identity.

Following this logic, chapter 4 has explored the type identities of the EU and China from four dimensions. The exploration of type identities has answered the question of 'what sort of actor it is?' To sum up, in terms of political regimes, China is a nation-state with a 'Chinese-characterised' democracy, and the EU is a supranational polity with multilevel democracy. In terms of strategies, China is a rising power, which lives within the global order that is built by the West, but intends to bring some reforms to it. The EU is a normative power, which takes promoting normative principles as one of its core interests, but given its complicated nature, it also has materialistic requirements. The domain of values is the point where there are the most intensive clashes between the two. As an Eastern civilisation, Chinese values are different from the EU's Western culture. China is a nation-state which believes in Westphalian norms, and it is determined to keep its sovereignty intact, and resist any kind of intervention. But the EU is a post-modern entity, which believes it is rightful to go beyond borders and promote norms. Finally, with regard to economies, both of them have large GDP and trade volume, but China still has a relatively low living standard, but the EU's society has already been developed, and the EU's economic strength enables it to promote normative programmes.

The findings of this chapter have laid down the foundation for analysing role identity and the case study of the arms embargo negotiation. For instance, China's political regime was perceived by the EU as undemocratic, which led to the EU's intention to promote political reform through 'constructive engagement (which is supported by its type identity as economic power)' with China. But due to China's own values on democracy, the outcomes was not as satisfactory as the EU expected. Furthermore, China's insistence on non-interventionism and the EU's intention to promote norms clashed with each other, and led to the cooling down of the relationship in the 2005-08 period. This changed the role identities from that of maturing partners to that of critical friends. In terms of the arms embargo case, China's strategic type identity encouraged it to move closer to the EU, so that they could build multipolarity and balance the US. Lifting the arms embargo was seen as sign to prove this strategic partnership. If it was not because of the EU's normative identity, there was little reason for it (on the EU's stance alone, excluding the US influences hypothetically) to refuse lifting the embargo, because the elimination of the embargo implied more commercial interests. Additionally, the EU's political regime provided the platform for normative initiatives, therefore, the EU was able to show its normative identities in the arms embargo negotiation.

Chapter 5 has taken a historical review of the EU-China relations. It has demonstrated the perceptions of each other, and also their role identities that were based on these perceptions. The whole chapter can be seen as a long-period based case study, as the argument has been made on the basis of empirical experiences. At the beginning of the chapter, I explicitly introduced the notion of role identity, and then I have established the relationship between identity, interest and behaviour in Figure 9. Furthermore, I explained the concept of 'perception' as the complementary factor to understand the function of role identity. On this basis, I then reviewed the five phases from 1975 to 2012. In each phase, there was a pair of role identities, based on the mutual perceptions. When the perceptions changed, the role identities were transformed, and then the status of the relations varied accordingly. These observations on the historical experiences have demonstrated the causality between role identities and the bilateral relationship.

Chapter 6 has revealed the clash of identities in the case of the arms embargo negotiation. It is not only concerned with the type identities that were mentioned above, but also the atmosphere of the role identities from 2003 to 2005. More importantly, it has been embedded into a broader triangle context. The involvement of the US has created a new role identity of the EU from China's perspective. Instead of discussing what the EU *is* in the triangular relationship, this chapter has demonstrated what the EU is *not*. In 2003 and 2004, the EU was *not* the US in terms of its geopolitical reasoning and its endorsement of multilateralism. But eventually, given the complex nature of the EU, it still had multiple connections with the US, which made it not *that* different from the latter. These alterations in the EU's role identities have not only changed the EU's behaviour, but also China's perception of it, and then changed China's behaviour afterwards. After the arms embargo negotiations, the EU-China relations has entered into the phase of being critical friends.

The case study, along with the discussion in previous chapters, has confirmed the hypothesis that identity plays a decisive role in EU-China relations. Furthermore, the investigation of the two actors' identities has produced a multifaceted description of the EU and China. It has not simply demonstrated the qualities of the two, but also explained the implications of these qualities for the bilateral relationship.

Methods Adopted and Sources Deployed

This major method adopted in this thesis was a rigorous investigation and quantitative analysis on 176 Chinese language literatures on EU-China relations. After filtering out irrelevant articles in the CNKI, these sources were collected by mainly identifying their titles or key words of 'EU-China relations', 'EU-US relations', and 'China-US relations'. A qualitative analysis was applied in investigating the content of these Chinese language articles. It highlighted the identified key words (e.g., 'multipolarity', 'EU-US breach', 'US opposition' and so on) and calculate their appearances in the narratives in the form of percentages, which contributed to showing the extent to which China perceived the EU as a partner or something else. Through such a qualitative analysis, this thesis has clearly demonstrated Chinese observers' perception of the EU, and has also shown how these perceptions have influenced EU-China relations.

As a complementary method to acquire information that cannot be accessed from the method above, interviews have been conducted in Beijing, Brussels and the UK. Most of the Chinese interviewees are based in universities and research institutions that are funded and governed by Chinese governments, some of them even have access to China's European policy-making circle. The European interviewees are not as many as Chinese ones, but both of them had taken critical positions in EU institutions, and had participated in the high-level dialogue with Chinese officials. Therefore, even though they accounted for few numbers in the list of interviewees, their contribution to forming the ideas of this thesis was not marginal.

Responding to research questions

In the Introductory chapter, I have laid down three research questions. The discussions in this thesis have answered them respectively.

1. What is the EU? What is China?

The best way to understand the EU's nature is to become aware of its complexities. Therefore, chapter 1 has demonstrated that in the CFSP, the EU has been given more power by the Lisbon Treaty, but given the overlapped competences among institutions and positions, the complexity of the EU has not been reduced. Member states have retained most of the competences in this area, which made the EU less integrated in terms of foreign and security policies. Even in the CCP, the reinforcement of the competence of the Parliament meant that there would be more actors who could impact on the decision-making of the EU. Moreover, the diverse initiatives and interests of member states have increased the complexity of the EU. The exploration of the powerful member states has shown that they do not share the same strategies in the CFSP. Additionally, the photovoltaic case has demonstrated the divergences between the member states which have overwhelming retail sectors and those that are major manufactory powers are producers. To sum up, the EU is a complicated entity, to understand what it is, we need to see clearly who is speaking for the EU.

With the awareness of the complexity, chapter 1 has given two reasons for arguing that it is still valid to analyse identity at the EU level. One is that EU's legal personality has been widely recognised, the other is that the EU's special qualities makes it different from any other

international actor, therefore it is valuable to analyse the EU in its own right. In addition, the case study has given an empirical reason. In the negotiation over arms embargo, China had mainly focused on building friendly relationships with individual powerful member states, but neglected the EU's institutions and the veto mechanism in this case. However, the individual states did not successfully help China to lift the embargo. This lesson has shown the importance and necessity to look at the EU level.

To counter the intuitive consideration of China as a unitary international actor, chapter 2 has examined multiple actors and their competences in China's foreign policy-making system. It has shown that there are various actors within the system, and their interests are not always compatible while they are facing different issues. To some extent, their interests may compete, or even conflict. As demonstrated in the arms embargo case, its efforts to lift the embargo was challenged by the need to prevent Taiwan's campaign for independence. To sum up, both China and the EU have complicated policy-making systems, within which there are various actors and diverse competences. Therefore, it is needed to understand who is speaking for them and what is its genuine interest.

2. What is identity in the constructivist context?

Section 2.3.1 of Chapter 2 has explained the concept of identity. Identity is a concept borrowed from sociology, and it answers the question of 'who am I'? In the IR context, it refers to the international actors' qualities that define the actors' interests and shape their behaviours. Constructivism indicates that identity can be influenced by the external environment, but in a way of self-realisation, which means the actor is not directly changed by international society. It must conceive the atmosphere of the society and then internalise the perception into the construction of identity. In the constructivist context, the question of 'who am I' is composed of two sub-questions. The first one refers to a kind of self-understanding, it means that the actor conceives itself and realises its own qualities. This process of self-understanding generates type identity. The second one refers to inter-subjective recognition. It involves two actors, and the perception of each other generates the role identities of them. Type identity and role identity have been the main objects that have been analysed in this thesis.

3. What are the functions of identities?

The functions of identities have been explained respectively in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 established three functions of type identity. Firstly, type identity is generated by self-understanding in the process of socialisation, therefore the quality of type identity forms the actor's behavioural patterns. Secondly, the process of self-understanding helps the actor define its interests. Thirdly, type identity shapes the way of recognising others, so it influences the construction of role identity. The EU and China's type identities have been explored in accordance with these functions.

Role identity emphasises the interactions between the actor and the external environment, and the interactions among actors. In the relations between the actor and the external environment, as stated above, the atmosphere of the external environment needs to be internalised by the actor, so that it can influence the construction of the role identities. In terms of the actor-actor relations, it has been illustrated in Figure 9. It has recognised that behaviour is influenced by interest, but what is critical in the figure is that it has argued that interest is not naturally born with the international society, but needs to be conceived by the actor, and the process of conceiving is influenced by the actor's identity. As shown in Figure 9, the interactions between actors are dynamic and inter-subjective, therefore, the relationship between actors changes along with the transformation of role identities. The functions of type and role identity are not separated, as have been demonstrated in Chapter 5, they work together to influence the actors' behaviour and the relations between them.

Implications and outlooks for future research

The intention of this thesis was to show the gaps between the perceptions both China and the EU have of each other. The case study of the arms embargo case and the historical review of EU-China relations have shown the two actors' imperfect perceptions of the other's qualities. For instance, China instrumentalised its economic attractiveness to try to persuade the EU to lift the arms embargo. But firstly, it ignored the influence of EU's institutions and focused on that of individual states, and secondly, it knew that there were opposing voices, but it was over-confident in the weight of its economic strength, and chose to ignore the normative powers and their needs. Eventually, it failed in that campaign by spending—if not wasting—substantial diplomatic resources. Even worse, it seemed that China did not learn its lesson. In 2012, the

then Premier Wen Jiabao was still working hard to make the EU lift the embargo.⁷²⁶ On the EU's side, there is also mistakes that have been made. For example, the EU only saw China's political regime and wanted to reform it, but because it did not pay attention to China's history and culture, it did not understand why China believed in non-interventionism and why China persisted in applying different norms.

Through the exploration of the EU and China's identities, this thesis has illustrated their identities, especially the type identities in diverse areas. The demonstration of China's political regime, strategy and values could help European observers to understand what China is in this domain. Conversely, the illustration of the EU's institutions and its identity as a normative power would contribute to enhancing the Chinese understanding of the EU. The historical review and the case study have shown that China has perceived the EU's strategy from a perspective of China's own and assumed that the EU would be willing to constrain US power. So the implication of this thesis is to suggest that it is important to know what the others want, but not what you want others to do.

Despite this thesis analysing various aspects of the EU-China relationship, it did not cover the full narratives of the human rights issues and the impact of the financial crisis on the relationship. This thesis did mention human rights in a couple of places, but did not integrate them altogether. Given the importance of this topic in EU-China relations, it certainly should be given more attention, or maybe there should be a case study that works on how identity influences the two actors' policies on human rights. So is the financial crisis, it would be interesting to see how their identities switched in its wake, particularly in terms of foreign direct investment. Furthermore, the nature of the EU and China as international actors keep evolving in the world politics, hence their identities might change accordingly. For instance, the EU is facing the challenge brought by the Brexit (along with other scepticisms in member states such as Italy, the Netherlands and so on), so how will this event impact the EU's identity as an integrated polity, and thereby impacting EU-China relations, would be a potential topic to be studies in the future.

⁷²⁶ "China premier Wen Jiabao urges end to EU arms embargo", BBC News, September 20, 2012, [online] available at: < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19657940>. > [accessed 23 May 2014].

Appendix

List of Interviews:

Interviewee 1 (as marked in the footnotes of the thesis) is an official that worked in the European Commission. The interview was conducted in the UK in October 2015.

Interviewee 2 (as marked in the footnotes of the thesis) is a professor in Renmin University of China. The interview was conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 3 (as marked in the footnotes of the thesis) is a professor in the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations. The interview was conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 4 (as marked in the footnotes of the thesis) is a professor in the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). The interview was conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 5 (as marked in the footnotes of the thesis) is a professor in the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). The interview was conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 6 is a professor in the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). The interview was conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 7 is a professor in Renmin University of China. The interview was conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 8 is a professor in Tsinghua University. The interview was conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 9 is a professor in China Institute of International Studies. The interview was

conducted in Beijing in March 2014.

Interviewee 10 is an official who worked in the EEAS. The interview was conducted in Brussels in February 2015.

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